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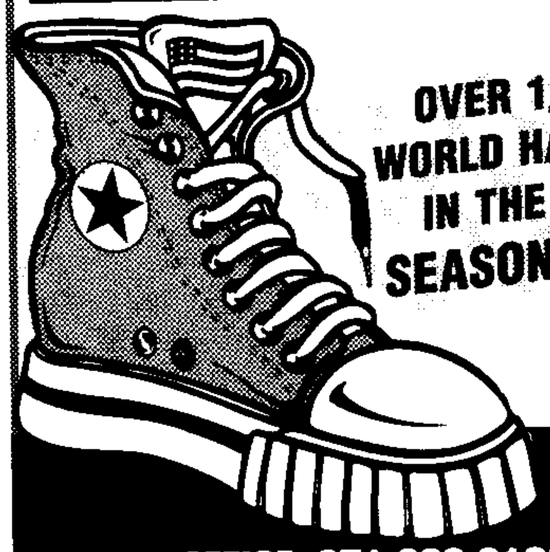

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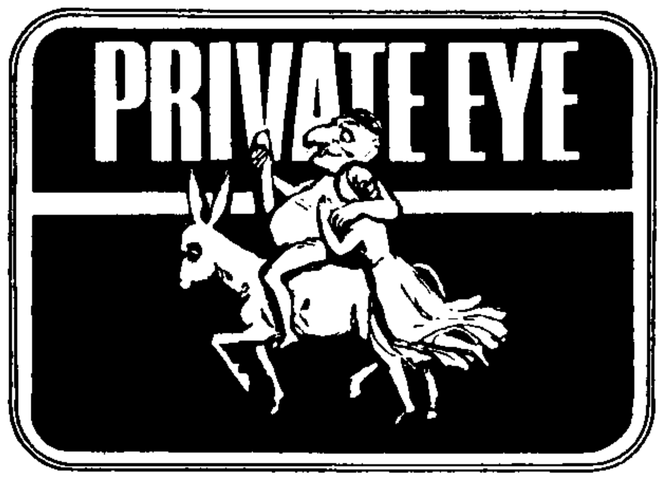


COLOUR SECTION

NICHOLAS Coleridge, head of Conde Nast magazines in Britain, wrote an embarrassing piece in last week's *Spectator* defending Lloyd's of London and its chairman David Coleridge – who happens to be Nicholas's father. Young Coleridge was cross with a Tory MP who had dared to criticise his daddy for not placing himself on high-risk syndicates like many of the "names" who have lost money. The conduct of Coleridge *pere*, according to little Nicholas, was merely "prudent".

That's one way of putting it. For, as a Channel 4 programme on Lloyd's revealed last December, David Coleridge was in one of the notorious "baby syndicates" – tiny syndicates of a few Lloyd's insiders which, as the programme pointed out, "were a clear example of the potential conflict between an underwriter's duty to his names and a desire to look after himself". (It was easy for profitable business to be pushed into a baby syndicate while outside "names" lost money on the main syndicate.)

When the programme's presenter, Christopher Hird, asked David Coleridge whether he had belonged to any baby syndicates, the reply was vague: "Was I a member? My own firm used to run a syndicate that was only open to members of Lloyd's who joined through my firm, but I don't think it was that small, I don't know, probably about 50 names or something like that..."

In fact, the syndicate had just six members, including Coleridge. Another of the six, Ian Hay Davison, explained to Hird: "I thought it was the archetypal baby syndicate – that was why I joined it. I thought it might be a lifetime of profits."

BAD news from the legal department of British Telecom, where the newly-heralded and much-vaunted property law department, by which the BT mandarins hoped to make millions, has suddenly been closed.

In desperation, Colin Green, BT's chief legal adviser, wrote to Brian Holland, solicitor at the Post Office, asking if he had any vacancies for BT's sacked conveyancers. Mr Holland's reply could not disguise the irony that the privatised BT should now come begging to the publicly-owned Post Office.

"We do not at present have any vacancies," concluded Mr Holland.

THE LATEST twist in the Stratford School saga comes with the resignation of Ghulam Shaida as chair of the school's governing body.

Mr Shaida has made full apology to Anne Snelling, the head teacher, for his conduct towards her over recent months, citing the fact that he had been "used" as his only defence.

The apology is unusual for two reasons. First, it is virtually unheard of for a Muslim male to offer apologies to any woman, let alone one with whom he had had such a long and bitter dispute. Second, the text of the settlement was dictated to Mr Shaida by lawyers acting for Mrs Snelling and appointed by the National Association of Head Teachers, which has supported her throughout the dispute.

This brings to an end a fatuous assault allegation which Mr Shaida has for months tried to sustain. Next to fall is likely to be Harbajan Singh, the teacher governor, who has also brought proceedings against Mrs Snelling.

Now the only person still pursuing the vendetta is the *Eye*'s old penpal Muhammad Haque (see Letters *passim*), of the London Collective of Black Governors. Even now he is stating that the cases against Mrs Snelling will be proven, and he has said that he will name the first Newham head teacher who should be sacked during the first week in June.

MR JUSTICE Waterhouse presided over the recent case in which Wafic Said, the millionaire Syrian arms dealer and friend of the Thatchers, sued Michael Baki, a fellow Syrian and former business colleague, for an unflattering article he had published in an Arab magazine (the magazine was not a defendant).

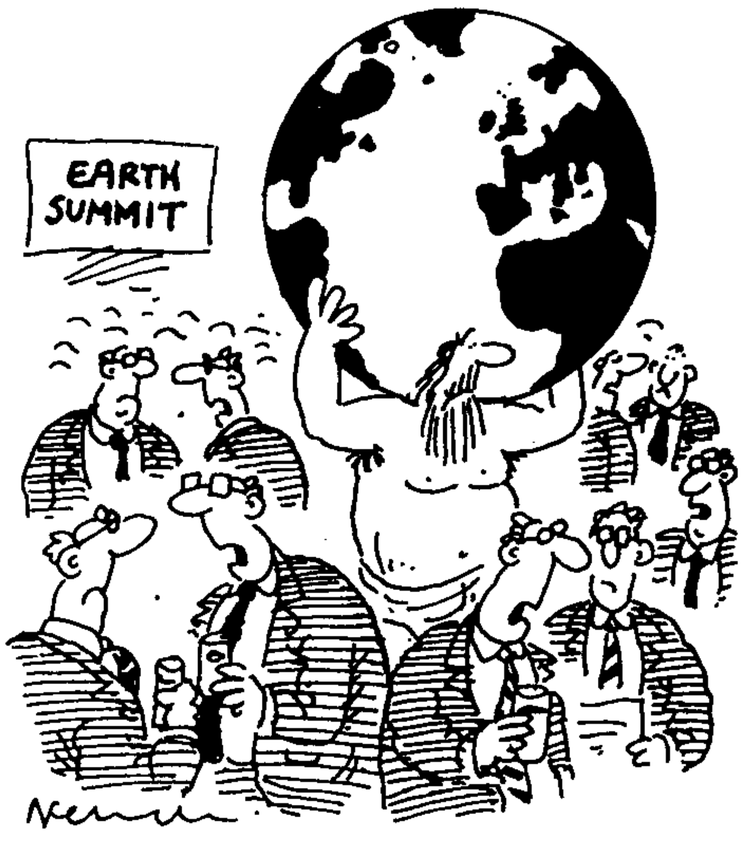
He sat impassively while two men, the much-travelled Sir Dennis Walters, former Tory MP for Westbury, and the British ambassador to Saudi Arabia both told the jury that Wafic Said was probably the greatest man in the history of the world. When Baki tried to bring witnesses to put another side to that story, the learned judge said that would be quite impossible.

Discussing damages in his summing up, Waterhouse told the jury that they must "put out of their minds" the fact that Said was a millionaire and the defendant a pauper. They must award damages as they thought fit to restore Mr Said's reputation. The jury responded warmly with damages of £400,000. (Although Said announced through counsel that he would not enforce the collection of the damages, doing so would in any case have been fruitless as Baki is broke.)

The interesting thing about the case was not the ludicrous damages (par for the course from juries), but the cross-examination of Said. Wafic was asked by Baki, acting for himself, about his interest in Aitken Hume International plc and a failed Washington bank, Washington Bankcorp. Said's evidence was that he was only a passive investor in these institutions, but in the case of Aitken Hume his activity seems far from passive: he was at one stage a director, and through his own trust holds 30 percent of the shares.

Washington Bankcorp was the subject of a vicious proxy battle between Said and others against the bank's president, one Luther Hodges. Said settled, eventually carrying a substantial loss. Baki also asked Said about one Robert Abboud, a shareholder in Washington Bankcorp. Said said that Abboud was a retired banker. Unfortunately Baki was distracted and did not press him further on this. If he had, he could have asked Said if he knew that Abboud was also prominent in the First American bank, which was really a front for BCCI.

● Mr Justice Waterhouse used to be a young barrister called Ronald Waterhouse who came into *Private Eye* once a fortnight to read the magazine for libel. What a pity he has forgotten the irreverence and the sense of absurdity that marked out his sensible attitude to libel in those days.



STREET OF SHAME

THERE WAS a bumper crop of conflicts of interest in Fleet Street the weekend before last.

The front page of the *Sindie*'s business section was filled with the news that Lord Stevens of Ludgate had sold all his shares in United Newspapers. This is a story that has yet to be reported in either the *Daily* or *Sunday Express* (chairman: Lord Stevens of Ludgate).

Over at the *Observer*, City editor Melvyn Marckus used his column to attack the *Mail on Sunday* for reporting unfavourably on Lonrho. The *Observer* is, of course, owned by Lonrho.

The *Sunday Times* (prop: R. Murdoch) went to town on the story of the footballing *coup* by Sky television (prop: R. Murdoch). And who did the paper's editor, Andrew Neill (a former chief executive of Sky) choose to mastermind his coverage? Why, *Sunset Times* media hack Jonathan Miller, until recently the public relations director of Sky TV.

Meanwhile, the *Telegraph* newspapers' lonely crusade to reassure their readers that all was tickety-boo with the property firm Olympia & York reached new heights of dishonesty. "High Flying Canary! The Sky's The Limit For This New London Landmark" was the headline on a gushing feature in the children's supplement, *Young Telegraph* on 23 May. It reported that "some of the world's most prestigious companies" had moved into Canary Wharf — "including the *Daily Telegraph*!"

The article was packed with other "High-Flying Facts" about the building ("It also houses the world's most sophisticated computerised window-cleaning system!... The fastest lifts in the UK soar from the ground to the top storey..."). Not a mention, however, of Canary Wharf's other record-breaking achievements — as Britain's biggest-ever insolvency and most spectacular white elephant.

Could this reticence by any chance be related to the fact that the Reichmann brothers are friends of *Telegraph* proprietor Conrad Blackadder?

THE *Financial Times* let out loud cries of rage in its recent leading article on BSkyB's victory over ITV in the battle to broadcast live premier league soccer matches. But the *FT*'s leader carried more humbug than the pick 'n' mix sweet counter at Woolies.

ITV executives who had blanched at the way the deal was sewn up by Alan Sugar and others and had dared to challenge it were guilty of "partisan illogic which would make a football commentator blush", said the *FT*. A TV network like ITV, funded by advertising, could not be considered free to consumers; the "doublethink" of those arguing in favour of soccer being shown on ITV had been "exposed"; and the new football deal, giving the games to Sky, was "a good thing".

Sadly, the incensed leader writer forgot to mention one small but pertinent fact: that the *FT* is owned by Pearson, which has a jolly large stake in Sky.

Normally this might have made an excellent story the *FT*'s media person, Ray Snoddy, if he were still presenting *Hard News*. Instead Snoddy appeared on *Channel 4 News* making it plain that he was — surprise, surprise — on the side of the court that refused to issue an injunction against the Sky deal.

A SURPRISE bidder is preparing to enter the contest to buy Mirror Group Newspapers, alongside Irish squillionaire Tony O'Reilly and the "management buy-out" group led by Sir Peter Parker. It is *La Repubblica*, the well-respected Italian daily newspaper.

Quite why *Repubblica* should want to throw yet more money into the Street of Shame - especially after spending millions on a large shareholding in Andreas Whittam Strobes's *Indescribablybroke* - is a mystery. Nevertheless, the paper's chairman, Prince Carlo Carracciolo, was espied last week dining in the Riverside Cafe, an upmarket Italian restaurant in Hammersmith, with *Mirror* columnist Paul Spart and former *Mirror* editor Mike Molloy, telling them excitedly of his plans for "thee Diley Meeror".

Also present at the meal, curiously, was Alexander Chancellor, editor of the *Indie*'s Saturday magazine. What can it all mean?

NOT SATISFIED with having been suspended for a week for upsetting Lord Snowdon, *Evening Standard* diary hack Sebastian "Flyte" Shakespeare has now managed to incur the wrath of another peer.

Shakespeare was researching a feature about the Gloucestershire Blow family and had made a number of calls to the goofy Isabel Blow, formerly *Tatler* fashion stylist Isabel Broughton, who is married to socially sensitive barrister Detmar Blow.

Isabel told Shakespeare that her husband wanted to avoid any publicity that might damage his supposedly flourishing divorce practice, but the terrier-like Shakespeare persisted. That is, until his editor, Paul Dacre, received a call from Lord Rothermere demanding to know who was the wretched man who kept phoning the best friend of Lord Rothermere's daughter and pestering her to talk about the eccentric family into which she had married.

IN HER *Sindie* column a few weeks ago, Lynn Barber chose the occasion of Prince Brian's loopy TV documentary about the idyllic life to be had in the Orkneys and Shetlands to reminisce about her own visit to Stronsey, in the Orkneys, to profile TV chef Keith Floyd, who was making a documentary there.

She described a vignette of local life — a NEXT clothing catalogue party — and told how she was invited to a private house and was asked not to tell any of the island men about it. Various women stripped to their underwear and tried on clothes that had been obtained on approval. Barbie Doll also suggested that the local women were desperate to attend a dance that had been laid for the programme, so that they could meet the crew members.

The Stronsey islanders were furious. A local teacher wrote to Barber's editor, Ian Jack, to complain. Barely a word of what she had written was true, it was said. She did visit a private house, but not to attend a NEXT party: it was at the invitation of its owner, Fiona Holgate, who thought the she-elephant might appreciate a bath, conditions on the island being somewhat primitive. There was no NEXT party, no other women trying on clothes, and only in the bedroom in which Barber was allowed to undress, were there a few NEXT boxes lying around.

It is hardly a shocking observation that people living on an island seven miles by five and which has no clothes shops should shop by mail-order. Barber has tried to laugh off her exaggerations in her column (she did not explain them, however) and has apologised to the islanders via BBC Radio Orkney.

A "deep throat" who persuaded several newspapers that he was a senior executive at British Airways was exposed on the front page of the *Sindie* two weeks ago as a former employee of a paint company who has no connection with the airline.

In an accompanying two-page spread inside the paper, City hack Chris Blackhurst described how this conman — who used the pseudonym "Robert" — had maintained his act for many years without incurring suspicion. There was a detailed account of how one leading business journalist had been duped into buying "Robert" lunch at the Waldorf.

The hack was not named. Hardly surprising: it was in fact one Chris Blackhurst.

"YOU'RE FIRED!" screamed a headline in the *Independent on Sunday* last weekend, above a long article on the "traumatic" business of giving or getting the sack. There were plenty of case histories in the piece — but, oddly, no reference to the *Indescribablyboring* itself, where dismissals are fast becoming an everyday occurrence.

Following Andreas Whittam Strobes's sudden firing of his foreign editor Godfrey Hodgson (see last *Eye*), almost all the paper's "stringers" have been thrown overboard with similar lack of warning or delicacy. Two weeks ago no fewer than 30 of these freelance foreign correspondents got a message from City Road saying that they needn't bother sending any more despatches to the *Indie* — and, more to the point, would have their money stopped forthwith. Some, who had only recently taken up residence in far-flung capitals on the promise of regular work from the paper, are now left stranded.

More tactful still was the treatment of *Indie* foreign hack Peter Pringle, who, while visiting the London office the week before last, met a bearded young man who was introduced to him as "Andrew Higgins, our Moscow correspondent". Since Pringle himself is the *Indie*'s Moscow correspondent, he was understandably puzzled. No one had thought to tell poor Pringle that he was being uprooted from Moscow (only a year after his arrival) and relocated to New York.

SUN columnist Gary Bushell turned heads in the rag's newsroom recently when he prepared for his ludicrous appearance on *Wogan*.

The enlightened social commentator was spotted in the features editor's office, which is separated from the newsroom by a glass partition. With the blinds partly drawn, he sat in a swivel chair, talking and gesticulating to thin air.

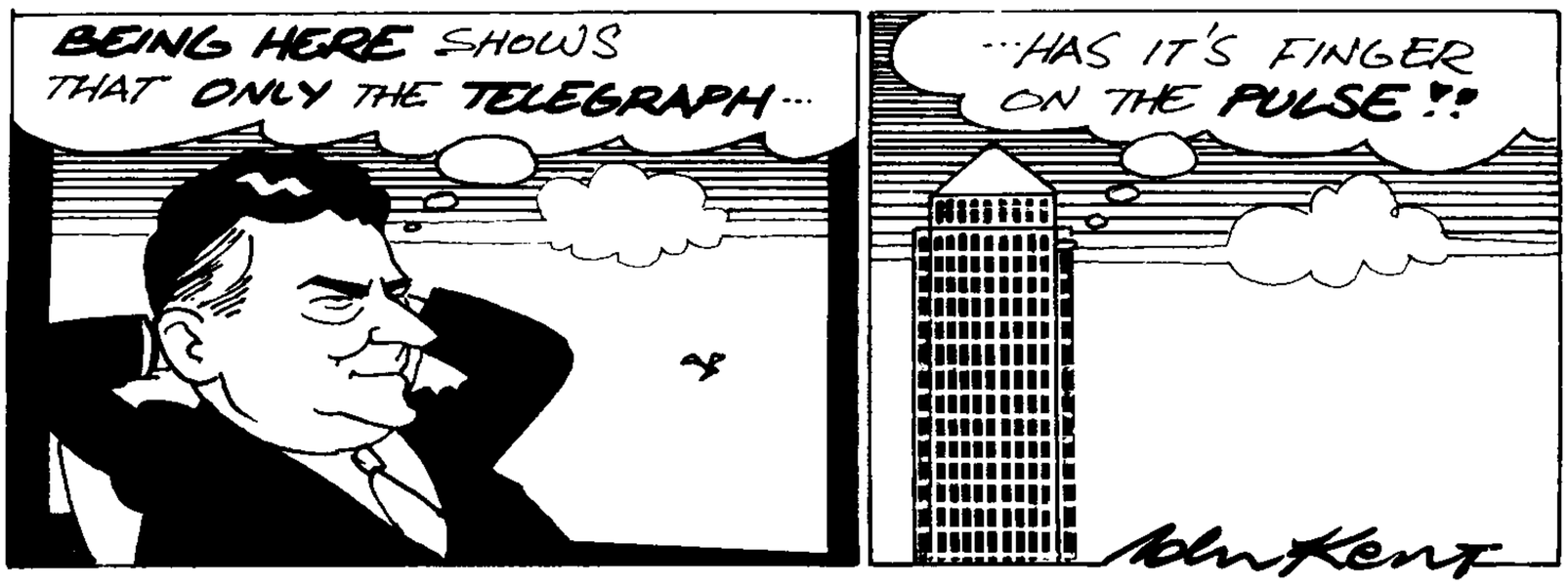
Eventually the hacks started to ape his performance, so Gal invited a secretary to join him in the glass-walled box and stand in for the chat-show host. Later, he told colleagues that he was scheduled to appear with a bit of posh (Drusilla Beyfus) who had just written about modern manners (see *Literary Review*). "Should I ask her," wondered Bushell, "if it's bad manners to wipe your nob on the curtain after sex?"

MUTINOUS hacks at the *Observer*, warned by Donald "Busy" Trelford that many of them will have to take redundancy because of the paper's shortage of dosh, have been fascinated to learn that at least one of their number seems to be unaffected by the general belt-tightening.

He is girthsome sports editor Simon Kelner, who is soon to become editor of the *Observer* magazine (see last *Eye*). It has now been discovered that his salary last year was £104,000, making him the highest paid executive on the paper after Pixie Trelford himself. Why so? It seems that Hugh McIlvanney, the paper's famous Glaswegian sportswriter, is paid £102,000, and when Kelner took the job of sports editor last year he said he was not prepared to earn less than any of his staff.

No hack at the *Observer* magazine has a salary anywhere near six figures, so presumably the justification for Kelner's vast pay-packet will no longer apply. Nevertheless, the cheeky chappie is apparently hoping for a further pay rise when he takes up his new post in August. As we disclosed in the last *Eye*, he has also been promised "wall-to-wall pussy".

Blackadder



MEMBERS of Parliament have rallied to our revelation (see last *Eye*) that the Government is trying to kill off the select committee on energy, which performed its duties too well.

A motion put down as the Commons was due to rise for Whitsun said that the select committee was "the only way to ensure adequate scrutiny of this area of government activity."

Signatories included the Tory chairman, Dr Michael Clark, and two committee members, Alex Salmond, the SNP leader, and Labour's John McAllion.

By the time Parliament rose, 24 MPs had put down their names. Other supporters of open government are expected to add their names now that Parliament has resumed.

WHEN the *Eye* last year accused Micheal Heseltine of deliberately "misleading Parliament" in claiming that he and the Government were still trying to decide what to do about the Property Services Agency, the vastly wealthy owner and builder of official buildings, we had good grounds.

We pointed out that the PSA had just been given a new permanent secretary, Geoffrey Chipperfield, who at energy had played the key role in selling off the electricity industry at a bargain basement price. It was obvious that he had been chosen because of his experience of privatisation, and we concluded: "The reality is that Chipperfield's circus will now set to work to raise as much cash as it can by underpricing PSA assets. Then he will retire with a gong."

It has now just been announced that the Government is to start by selling off the PSA's projects division, one of Britain's biggest construction organisations. The vultures — Taylor Woodrow, BICC, Trafalgar House and Tarmac — are already gathering to inspect the pickings.

Was Heseltine really so dim that he did not realise what his own department (then environment) was up to? Or had he decided that the public did not want to hear any more talk about privatisation, which had been rumbled as a racket, and that he must therefore lie to hide the facts before a general election?

HOW crucial was the role played by the City of London in Labour's ignominious general election defeat?

Shadow chancellor John Smith was warmly received during his pre-election "prawn cocktail" offensive on the Square Mile, the financiers' trust in him being greatly enhanced by his reluctance to accuse them of "short-termism" — ie preferring to make a fast buck for themselves rather than help sustain the remains of UK manufacturing industry.

Alas, when it came to the crunch and a Labour victory looked likely, the City initiated a collapse in the value of the pound, to which Smith reacted (as the suits knew he would) by threatening a sharp rise in interest rates if Labour won. That, probably more than Smith's daft tax policies, was what lost Labour the election.

Looking back on recent events, Smith watchers recall his period (1974-76) as a junior minister at the energy department when he was the toast of the international oil companies. They applauded his efforts to forestall the partial nationalisation of North Sea oil and the formation of the British National Oil Corporation. While at energy, Smith was also much admired by his press officer, "Sir" Bernard Ingham.

THE FACTIONS are lining up to do battle in Birmingham's Sparkbrook constituency as rumours grow of Roy Hattersley's impending resignation as an MP at the end of this Parliament.

Senior Labour Party officials are aware of his plans, but no official announcement is planned — conveniently for all sides because it would prevent further changes in membership. Watch out for a sudden membership surge as happened in neighbouring Small Heath (*Eyes passim*).

A group of Trots, led by Erica Barnett, has already secured six places on the constituency Labour Party's executive committee and is scheming to get Barnett or a similar sympathiser at the top of an all-women shortlist. Barnett is the daughter of the ennobled Joel Barnett, Jim Callaghan's former treasury secretary and now vice-chairman of the BBC's board of governors. He is so embarrassed by Erica's antics that he has even cut her out of his will and left his estate to her one-year-old daughter.

Erica and fellow ex-International Marxist Mark Holland are aiming for an all-women slate on the basis that the left has more control of Labour Party women's groups. But they risk playing right into the hands of Fattersley's heir-apparent, city councillor Najma Hafeez.

Readers will recall how Hafeez's desperate parliamentary ambitions made her pop up like a Jack-in-a-box in any Labour constituency with an ethnic minority to speak of before the election. Husband and fellow councillor Albert Bore, a chubby middle class caucasian, even changed his name to Omar Farooq to please her fellow Asians.

Now Hafeez has decided that Sparkbrook must be hers and desperate lobbying is under way behind the scenes.

'Backbiter'

THE NEW BOYS (3) & THE NEW GIRLS (1)

Gordon and Bridget Prentice

THE NEW Labour member for the Lancashire seat of Pendle, Gordon Prentice, 41, and the new Labour member for Lewisham East, Bridget Prentice, 39, are the first husband-and-wife team ever to be elected to Parliament simultaneously.

Both are ambitious Scots who graduated from local politics in the London borough of Hammersmith and Fulham where they presided over one disaster after another. Fortunately, they are unlikely to taste power ever again.

Gordon Prentice represented the safe Labour ward of Gibb's Green from 1982 until 1986. So popular was he with his ward party that it decided not to reselect him as a candidate and chose another man instead. Prentice then moved to another safe Labour ward, College Park and Old Oak, and did a Livingstone, ousting the leader of the Labour group immediately after the local elections.

He served as leader of the council from 1986 to 1988. So popular was he with his colleagues that they not only decided to drop him as leader in 1988, replacing him with Iain Coleman, but also, come the 1990 local elections, chose not to reselect him for College Park and Old Oak and chose Iain Coleman (who was moved from the Avonmoor ward) instead.

His reward for his service to the local party was to be given a marginal ward, Crabtree, where he came a cropper. With six candidates (two Labour, two Tory and two Liberal), Prentice came fourth. Given that his full-time job was as local government officer at Labour headquarters in Walworth Road, this must have been somewhat embarrassing.

While leader of the council, Prentice presided over a poisonous atmosphere in which the Labour and Tories barely communicated with one another. In 1987, after he acceded to the Labour leadership, the borough recorded the highest rate rise in the country — a hefty 127 per cent. This helped Labour lose the Fulham seat at the general election, with the highest swing from Labour to the Tories in the entire country.

From 1986 to 1990 the borough spend increased by 80 per cent and almost a thousand new council jobs were created. This was paid for by various means. There was a deferred purchase agreement by which the council tried to borrow £100 million, but this was stopped by the department of the environment. The council sold off 20 properties, including libraries and old people's homes. It even set up an offshore company in the Cayman Islands which the Inland Revenue quickly sussed as a blatant attempt at tax evasion.

Prentice sat on the strategy committee when Hammersmith and Fulham chose to do interest-swap deals with various banks, although the blame for this fiasco (which cost the council £400 million) ultimately fell on the shoulders of council officers. He also seconded the equally wrong-headed motion to seek a compulsory purchase order over the Fulham football club ground in order to ensure that the club stayed within the borough. Poll taxpayers will end up paying almost £250,000 in legal costs to the owners of the football club, while the council's own costs have reached £250,000. This does not, however, include its legal fees and costs at the public inquiry.

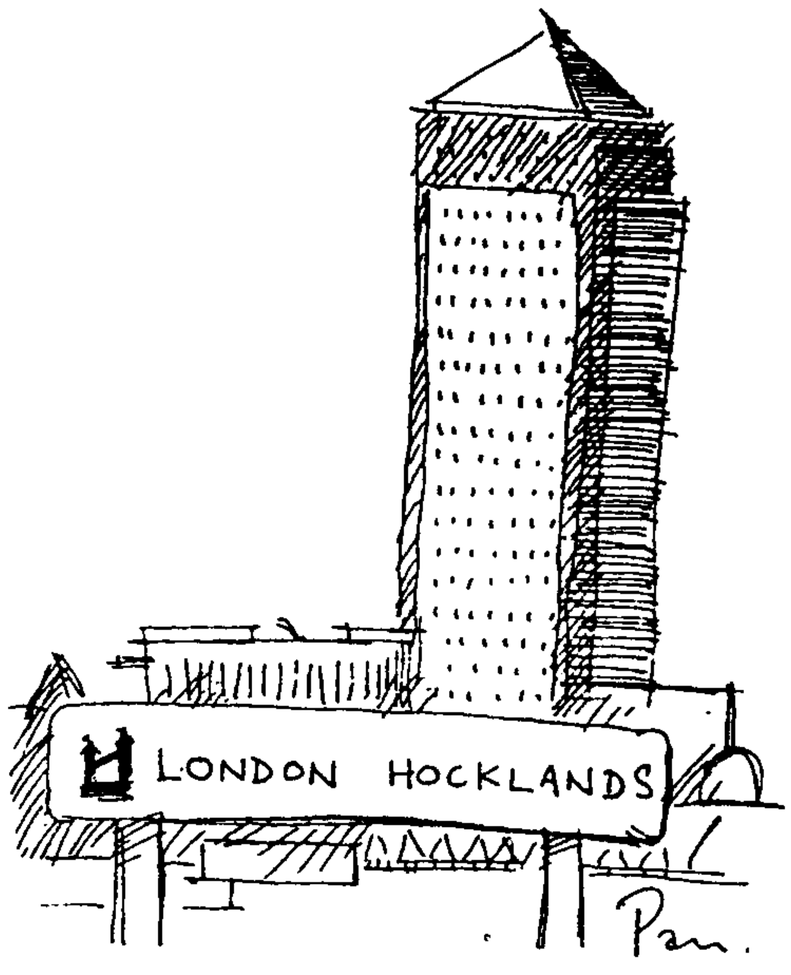
Gordon Prentice has been described by Labour colleagues as a man born with a lemon in his mouth — a dour, puritanical Scot who banned alcohol from the town hall offices of Labour councillors. The Tories exploited this prohibition by keeping council meetings going at night until after pub hours.

Both Gordon and Bridget Prentice were born and educated in Glasgow, where they overlapped at Glasgow university in the early 1970s (Gordon was president of the debating society). Bridget Prentice is a schoolteacher by profession, though she is now studying law, and she has served as a Hammersmith and Fulham councillor from 1986.

Between 1987 and 1990 she served as chair of the public services committee, responsible for direct labour organisations, and at one point she was not on speaking terms with the director of her department for a whole year. During this time, overpayment and bonus scams were exposed in the public lighting and sewerage areas. Her department proudly announced that its building organisation had notched up a surplus of £418,000, but when the district auditor came to call this had to be, er, slightly readjusted to show a loss of £100,000. Bridget stood for the Labour leadership in 1989, against the man who had defeated her husband, but the Labour councillors decided that one Prentice as leader had been enough.

She had also applied for the Fulham parliamentary nomination in 1986, standing on a soft left ticket. There were three candidates: one hard left, one soft left and one mainstream right-winger. After the first round, in which the hard left candidate came last, Bridget expected to scoop up the hard left vote. So popular was she with her comrades that the hard left chose to support the right-winger (Nick Raynsford) instead.

Bridget has not resigned from the Labour group since being elected as an MP, partly because she wanted to vote against Coun Coleman, her husband's sworn enemy, in the election for the group leadership. Coleman won the contest, but Bridget has decided to stay on, even though her parliamentary commitments will restrict her attendance time. Residents in Addison ward now have two absentee Labour councillors, since the other councillor for that ward works up in the Midlands. Yet the Labour group doesn't dare call a by-election because they fear they will lose it. Meanwhile, Bridget still turns up to council meetings, thereby earning her attendance fee, but then slips off to the House as well.



Grovel

I'M DELIGHTED to hear that Nabila Kashoggi, favourite daughter of the international merchant of death, Adnan, is to take up gainful employment in London.

Having narrowly avoided the ignominy of being permanently associated with the demise of a fat crook (Cap'n Bob fortuitously renamed the Nabila, the ship he bought from Kashoggi *père*, after his own daughter, Ghislaine) Nabila is to make her name in showbusiness.

Not for her the cloak and dagger world of international arms deals: this luscious if enigmatic woman has daringly launched Alegra Films to serve both cinema and television.

Nabila has something that David Putnam and Sir Richard Attenborough sadly lack — namely a father of whom everybody is very afraid. The new saviour of Wardour Street also has plenty of raw inside material with which to produce documentaries and features of the highest calibre: *The Mark Thatcher Story*, perhaps; or *Tiny Rowland — the movie*, with daddy giving valuable insight as a paid consultant, would be riveting.

● *TO LUCKNAM PARK, not for the much-reviled BBC "conference" binge, but for an even more lavish thrash: the retirement party of Sir Michael Angus, chairman of Unilever.*

The entire hotel was booked for three days for the company's directors and their wives, but sadly many of the 30 bedrooms remained unoccupied.

The total cost of the gathering was not unadjacent to a modest £100,000, which included a dinner at nearby St Catherine's Court, the mansion owned by film star Jane Seymour and which she now lets out for posh nosh.

THE REMOVAL vans have called again on my old chum Bernard Donoughue, the Labour peer, who has decamped from his agreeable Maxwell company house in Bloomfield Terrace, Pimlico, to Ebury Mews.

Before Bloomfield Terrace, Bernie had a flat in Sloane Square, and, like his former socialist millionaire boss, Cap'n Bob, he can afford something nice.

He made about a million out of his stake in stockbrokers Grieveson Grant in 1986, and he was being paid £400,000 a year (including the value of accommodation) as executive vice chairman of London and Bishopsgate, one of the two main Maxwell pension fund vehicles.

● *MY chum Anita Roddick, the self-canonising head of Body Shop, was incensed by Channel 4's Dispatches programme about her company two weeks ago and told her solicitors to seek an injunction preventing a second transmission in the usual Dispatches repeat-slot the following Sunday.*

C4 hastily briefed its lawyers, and a judge was put on stand-by to hear La Roddick's urgent application. But at the last minute Roddick's solicitors announced that she would not be seeking an injunction after all — on the bizarre grounds that she objected to the QC they had chosen for her.

Instead, Roddick has issued a libel writ against the programme. This is even odder considering how friendly it was.

I SEE that my good friend Sir Jonah Junor has commented in the *Mail on Sunday* on the likely elevation of Jeffrey Archer to the upper chamber.

Jonah opines: "After all, isn't the House of Lords already full of chancers and third raters?"

This cannot possibly be right. For it was only a few short years ago that Jonah himself confided in me of his ambition to be elevated to the same place. It was, he explained, a good place to get a nodding allowance of some £60 a day.

Chancers and third raters? Perhaps he's right, after all.

The Ret. Honorable Edward Heath, former Prime Minister of England, and Mrs. Heath

PROOF that Edward Heath is not as other single men has been provided by the *Okura Lantern*, house magazine of an extremely expensive Japanese hotel. As the photograph and caption show, Mr Heath is not a confirmed bachelor at all, but a happily married man.

Pseuds Corner

American Football
(a reflection upon the Gulf War)

Hallelujah!
It works.
We blew the shit out of them.

We blew the shit right back up their
own ass.
It works.
We blew the shit out of them.
They suffocated in their own shit!

Hallelujah.
Praise the Lord for all good things.

We blew them into fucking shit.
They are eating it.

Praise the Lord for all good things.

We blew their balls into shards of dust,
Into shards of fucking dust.
We did it.

Now I want you to come over here and
kiss me on the mouth.

Harold Pinter, *August 1991*
(reprinted from Index On Censorship)

CONTRIBUTORS: Too numerous to mention

£10 paid for entries

WILLIAM CASH, the Gussie Finknottle-like *Times* hack based in Los Angeles, recently wrote about the LA riots with admirable candour. He described how he was stranded at Hugh *Playboy* Hefner's mansion after a party and had to cover the uprising from the TV in Hefner's library.

However, I gather he has been less than forthcoming about the background to another piece he wrote for *The Times*: an interview in Nashville, Tennessee, with Jay McInerney.

Cash was taken for a bibulous lunch by the novelist, and by the time the pair returned to McInerney's home, Cash was so tired and emotional that McInerney's new wife, a Southern belle called Helen Bransford, suggested that the young Englishman might like to sleep it off in a guest bedroom.

Some time in the night Cash was violently and spectacularly sick, redecorating the bedclothes, walls, sofa and floor of his room. Resourceful as ever, Cash found some cleaning materials and set about wiping up the mess. What to do, though, with the sheets?

Cash was apprehended by Mrs McInerney at six o'clock in the morning as he was preparing to leave the house with the soiled sheets rolled up under his arm. As she put it to me in recalling the incident: "What a geek!"

Pip Pip!

MUSIC & MUSICIANS

PLAYERS in the orchestra pit at the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic complain bitterly about the horrendous can of worms which they claim their chairman, the cultureless Czar John Last, is vainly trying to keep shut.

While managers constantly rattle the collection tins to help pay for a £9 million refurbishment of the Phil's Hope Street venue, a QC is being hired — estimated cost: £1,500 a day — to smooth the ruffled feathers of the orchestra's bolshie artistes with an "independent" inquiry into their complaints.

The current crisis came to a head with the resignation of principal cellist Tim Walden and his wife Susan Henderson, who plays second fiddle. More resignations are predicted on grounds of "management interference" in artistic policy.

The Phil's problems seem to stem from the autocratic chairmanship of Last, an ex-biscuit buyer from Littlewoods who revels in his position as cultural worthy par excellence. Since he became chairman in 1986, three chief executives have left, their departures all revolving around disagreements with Last. An arch manipulator, he indicated that he would resign as chairman, and his intention was minuted. However, when the latest chief executive, Bob Creech, pleaded for Last to stay, he gratefully obliged.

The Creech appointment was very strange, given his age — 60 — and the fact that he came from a place in Canada even Canadians don't find interesting. Creaky's appointment might be made more understandable by the presence of his daughter, Antonia, not only as an orchestra member, but also as secretary of the local Musicians' Union.

Creech is rumoured to earn upwards of £72,000 — a lot more than his predecessor. Why Liverpool's citizens aren't told his exact salary is another mystery lost in the musicological mists.

In recent weeks, many more Phil members have intimated disenchantment with Last. Andrew Thompson, the deputy chairman, resigned on 13 May, only to announce he was taking back his notice a day later. Libor Pesek, the musical director for the last five years, is thinking about throwing the towel in, too, despite numerous deserved public plaudits concerning his achievements.

'Lunchtime O'Boulez'

NOOKS and CORNERS

SO FAREWELL then, Olympia & York. The unfinished, unlet and possibly unlettable Canary Wharf development will now vie with the unlovely and unnecessary British Library as the principal architectural monument of Lady Thatcher's reign.

London is now stuffed with surplus office accommodation and commercial rents are static, even falling. Now is the time for a sensible organisation to consolidate its position in the capital, yet the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England, aka English Heritage, still plans to disappear to Nottingham.

I have already aired my suspicion that relocating English Heritage to an inaccessible spot far from the capital had less to do with the financial implications of its 1987 corporate plan than with the Government's desire to emasculate the tiresome quango. After all, English Heritage's task of protecting historic buildings often impedes the smooth operation of market forces that favour property developer friends of the Government like My Lord Palumbo.

I have nothing against Nottingham — in fact, I rather like the place — but a national organisation that needs access to national archives and institutions cannot possibly operate so efficiently when sited out on a limb, while many members of staff are bound to leave rather than move. This is confirmed by a questionnaire issued to English Heritage staff last year: 63 voted in favour of the move, 122 "maybe" and 82 against.

The only hope of scuppering this absurd scheme seemed to be the advent of Jocelyn Stevens as Lord Montagu's successor as chairman, for it is difficult to imagine "Piranha Teeth" lording it over an empire in a place like Nottingham, far away from his grand and powerful friends in London. But then, as I reported in *Eye* 787, Stevens gravely disappointed me by endorsing the move as well as, quite disgracefully, condemning the English Heritage's past valiant efforts in resisting the obsessive architectural ambitions of Palumbo.

But now it is surely time for Stevens to think again. A meeting of the commissioners held in April reported, interestingly, that "the original pressure from central government for English Heritage to relocate outside London was based on political as well as financial considerations. Since relocation was first proposed, falling rents in London have reduced potential savings from relocating to Nottingham... A strictly commercial concern would not undertake such a project particularly in the present recessionary climate..." Quite so.

It is now estimated that the acquisition and conversion of the Adams warehouse in Nottingham alone will cost more than £24 million while the total bill for relocation has been estimated at £40 million. To spend that amount of public money on a foolish and pointless project when historic buildings all over England need repair grants seems irresponsible to the point of lunacy — especially as English Heritage, along with the DoE, could probably now move into Canary Wharf for next to nothing.

The commissioners have therefore wisely resolved — confidentially — to tell the new secretary of state for national heritage, Mr David "Dave" Mellor, that "it is now difficult to justify relocating to Nottingham on financial terms alone" and that they need "a reaffirmation of political support for such a move". So what will "Dave" do? Respond to market forces? Or persist in his predecessors' determination to damage the principal quango charged with protecting our "national heritage"?

HOT on the heels of the scandalous decision to mutilate the interior of St Francis', Gorton (Eye 786), I hear of plans to spoil another of the great Victorian Roman Catholic churches of Manchester.

This is the Church of the Holy Name, Oxford Road, designed by J.A. Hansom and begun in 1869 — a cathedral of a building which stands right opposite Manchester university. As I reported in Eye 711, this used to be a flourishing church; but the Jesuits have abandoned it while the Bishop of Salford, who simply loathes buildings of any architectural distinction, has withdrawn its parochial status.

The object of the exercise, of course, was to discourage and run down the congregation, so that the building could be sold off. And now there is an interested potential purchaser: the university. The presbytery has already been converted into the "Jabez Clegg Bar"; now the university is preparing a secret scheme to convert the body of the church into student accommodation. As at the Gorton church, this will ruin a magnificent interior; as at Gorton, public money has already been spent on the fabric of this listed church.

After the Gorton debacle, can either the Bishop of Salford or Manchester university justify their actions over the Church of the Holy Name?

'Piloti'

DEATH ON THE ROCK

WHY DID the *Sunday Times* and its sister paper the *News of the World* return with such passion to the stale and expensive game of hounding Carmen Proetta, the witness to the Gibraltar shootings of three unarmed IRA members by the SAS in 1988?

Most observers have put the twin "scoops" (in which Carmen Proetta is said to have offered to obtain a fake passport without apparently obtaining one) to the extraordinary personal bile of *Sunday Times* editor Andrew Neill and his faithful lawyer, Alastair Brett.

Both men are said to froth at the mouth at the very mention of Thames TV's programme *Death On The Rock*, and neither has recovered from the enormous sum of money dished out to Proetta by the *Sunday Times* when her libel case against the newspaper was settled.

There may, however, be an even more plausible explanation. It looks as though government ministers' liability for the "executions" may at last be tested at law — in the European court of human rights.

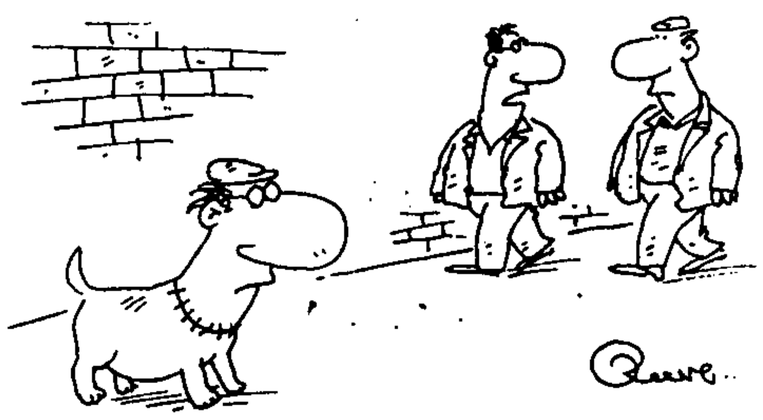
The litigation has been long and cumbrous, chiefly because of the European court's insistence that no matter can be heard there unless all possible legal remedies have been exhausted in the country of origin. Gradually, they have been knocked out of the UK courts and now the case has ground on to the European commission for human rights. Last year a long and detailed application went to the court from the Belfast solicitors representing the families. The essence of the case was that the (majority) verdict of the inquest in Gibraltar in 1988 — that the three were lawfully killed — was "perverse" and based on an entirely false premise put to the court by witnesses representing the British army and MI5.

These witnesses had insisted that the IRA members were not expected in Gibraltar, that they had not been under surveillance on their journey to the Rock through Spain, that their surprise appearance on the Rock with a car which might have had a bomb in it presented the security forces with no option except to shoot them down in the street.

On the contrary, argue the solicitors, the three had been under close surveillance ever since they landed in Spain; they had been followed very closely every yard to the frontier with Gibraltar, and then they were shot down. In support of this thesis (spelled out in detail many moons ago by the *Eye*'s special supplement *Rock Bottom*), the lawyers intend to quote from Spanish intelligence sources, and refer in particular to the fact that the Spanish intelligence officers who actually followed the IRA members to the Rock have all been decorated by their government and congratulated for their good work. Also, the families plan to produce at the court the evidence of the civilian witnesses to the shootings, all of whom told a completely different story from that told from behind screens and false names by the security forces.

Exposure in court as liars and perjurers, especially when some of the exposers are senior intelligence officers of Spain, a fully-fledged EC partner, is not something which the foreign office or the ministry of defence looks forward to. For months now, both great offices of state have been delaying and postponing their reply to the litigation. Now they have been given a final deadline by an irritable European court: 1 July. Either they reply by then or the court will proceed with the case without a reply.

Not a bad time for one of the crucial witnesses in the case to get the full "rubbish treatment" from the "free" Murdoch press.



"Just don't get him talking about his operation"

Sally Deedes

READER MRS James always pays her electricity bills on time. Like many people who work, she is rarely at home during the day when the meter readers call and hence receives the usual number of estimated accounts, all of which she pays without quibbling.

She was thus shocked to receive the following letter from the customer services department of LEB. It said: "We have obtained a warrant from the magistrates court to enter your premises without your consent to read the meter. An initial survey suggests that to execute the warrant it may be necessary to remove the locks from your premises and replace them with others to leave the property secure. As a result you will be unable to enter the premises with your own keys and although keys for the new locks will be available for collection at these offices you will be required to produce of your identity before the keys can be released." The cost of replacing the locks would be borne by Mrs James.

When she pleaded that there must have been a mistake, the LEB told her there hadn't been and assured her that since the meter belonged to the LEB the law allowed it to check it, even if that required violating the property of one of its law-abiding, fully paid up customers.

When the meter men called, Mrs James was there to receive them so her door stayed on its hinges. The visit was followed a fortnight later by a second man asking to read the meter. "Please," she begged, "have it. Take it now — I'll use candles. They're cheaper and definitely more user friendly."

There then followed a two-week silence and another letter telling her that she was... £260 IN CREDIT. There was no reimbursement, no apology — and certainly no indication of how much interest the LEB was earning from Mrs James's overpayment.

THE TV

True Stories

(Channel 4)

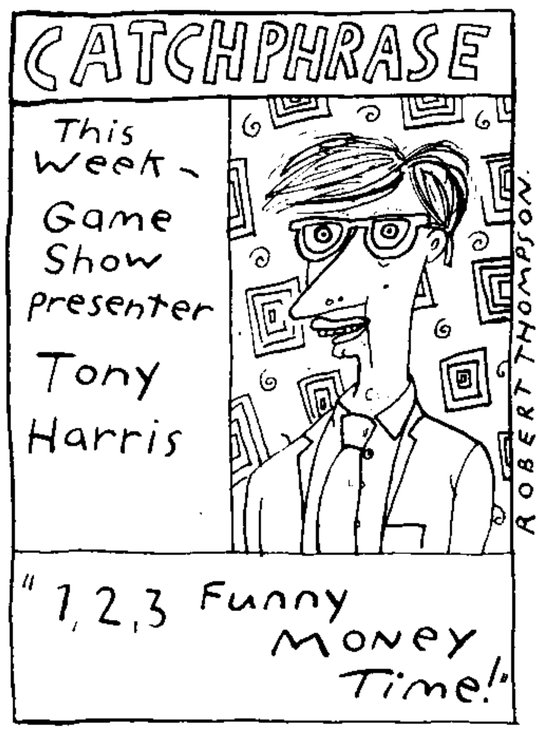
THE fundamental laws of TV criticism are few, but those that exist are absolutely binding. Thou Shalt Always Be Nasty To Comedy Shows. Thou Shalt Pretend That Everybody Watches *The Late Show*. And, most unforgiving of all, Thou Shalt Never Have A Bad Thing To Say About Documentaries.

Why is it documentaries always get such a good press? Even the most mundane and lifeless retread of an idea *Forty Minutes* did seven years ago is routinely hailed a work of rare moment. Some serious critics review nothing else, even though in private they'd much prefer to watch *LA Law*. The documentary, it seems, is sacrosanct; even if it's bad, it's only ever disappointing.

What we should not forget, though, is that documentaries are incredibly easy to review. For one thing, they are easy for the TV critic to get hold of: producers will invariably bike a video round to your house, knowing you'll give it a good review. For another, they're incredibly easy to write about: you just regurgitate what they have to say, drop the name of the producer (whom you recently met at a dinner party), and talk about "savage indictments" of something or other, and "searing critiques" of something else. 600 words? No trouble. And now that documentaries are officially an endangered species, under constant threat from the rampaging forces of Mammon, to review them critically would be in some way to let the side down, and almost certainly disqualify you from many of the smarter dinner parties.

The upshot is a series like *True Stories*. Although, on the face of it, hard to distinguish from all those other documentary "strands" on Channel 4 that no one watches, *True Stories* is more self-consciously self-important than any of them. The crucial distinction here is length. Instead of a modest half-hour like *This Week*, or 40 minutes like *Forty Minutes*, each *True Story* weighs in at an hour and a half, or even more.

This, in theory, gives time for the documentary maker to get under the skin of the subject, to investigate more thoroughly whichever human condition he is investigating this week. At least, that's the theory. In practice, we get some of the most flatulent and self-indulgent examples of the documentary art seen on British television in many years.



A typical recent example was Dennis O'Rourke's *The Good Woman of Bangkok*, a 105-minute portrait of a Thai prostitute named Aoi. Minutes into the film, a caption appeared. "The filmmaker was forty-three and his marriage had ended," you read. "He was trying to understand how love could be so banal and profound." Oops, you thought, and you were right. Struggling with the limitations of making a film about a subject 10,000 documentary makers had already made films about, the director had decided instead to make a film about himself making a film about it. Long, dreary, repetitive interviews with the prostitute followed, interspersed with shots of her lying in bed trying to get some sleep and of her eating and asking not to be filmed. It was exploitative; it was banal; but more than that it was breathtakingly boring.

Then, on 21 May, we had *Too White For Me*, the latest film from Nick Broomfield. This was originally to be about a concert in South Africa by the American rock singer Tracy Chapman, but it too turned into a film about the filmmaker trying to make a film about a concert that, it soon emerged, was never going to take place. Broomfield's method — as seen in his earlier, far more entertaining film about the loony South African fascist Eugene Terreblanche — is to stand around looking bemused while his subjects behave appallingly, but here, once again, an hour and three quarters was way too long to support such a perilously thin idea.

Needless to say, both these, and all the other films in the series, received adulatory reviews. On second thoughts, though, perhaps such reviews do serve an important purpose. By reading them, we can save ourselves the stupendous boredom of having to sit through the actual programmes. Everyone likes documentaries, as long as they don't have to watch too many of them. And let's not forget — Thursday night is *LA Law* night...

'Couch Potato'

MEDIA NEWS

THE CRISIS of journalism in the BBC continues as John Birt's "analytical journalism" — otherwise known as "a mission to explain government policy" — is causing havoc with the ratings of current affairs programme.

The appointment of the stern Birtite Glenwyn Benson as editor of *Panorama* has succeeded in what was believed to be almost impossible — cutting still further the programme's viewing figures. They are down to two million and plummeting.

The few remaining BBC journalists who don't agree with everything the Government does have been heard conspiring to recruit (don't tell Birt) an investigative journalist — or even two.

DID the quality of the debate at Lucknam Park match the quality of the food and wine? One gem passed on from the broadcasting beano perhaps provides an answer.

When told that drama was very expensive to produce, one of the men in suits ventured: "Yes, but there are some very good amateur groups, aren't there?" We can now no doubt look forward to a BBC season of local am-drams doing Ayckbourn.

RADIO 4 will soon have a spare one-hour slot on Thursday afternoons. Simon Elmes, the executive responsible for filling it, summoned a gaggle of BBC producers to a "brainstorming session" two weeks ago, to run a few ideas up the flagpole.

His report of the meeting is causing much mirth at Broadcasting House. It consists of "a higgledy-piggledy list of words" which apparently describe the new programme: "*wisdom* not information; frisson not orgasm; unplanned-ish; process not resolution; exploration; random is OK; props to focus on; getting out; passion, laughter; *create* agenda; controversy; coping; interaction; the future." And so on: there are no fewer than four pages of this babble.

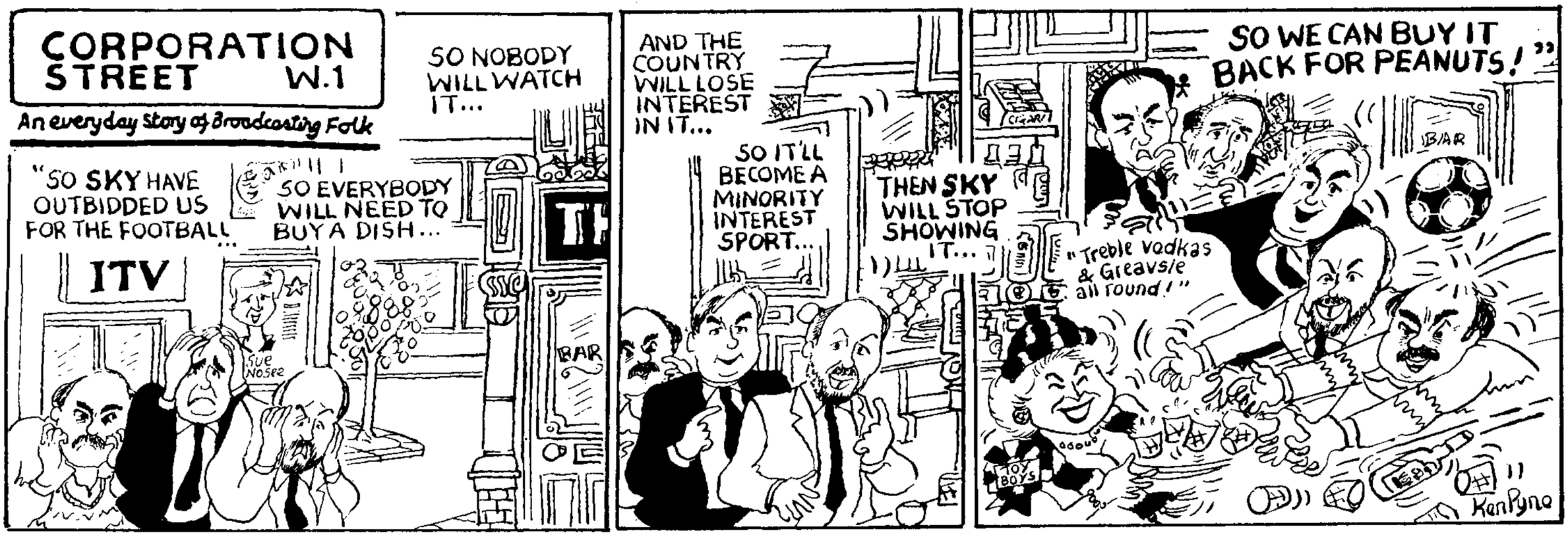
"We ended up," Elmes concludes, "in the ante-room to an idea/programme format with the notion of a rolling week-on-week sampling of life..."

THE BBC's plan to conquer Europe by satellite with World Service Television is making the launch of Sky television look positively sleek.

Writing to an interested expatriate British viewer in Lavilletertre, France, a sales and marketing assistant at World Service TV explained that the exciting new service was available via Intelsat VI satellite, 27.5 degrees west, on the East Spot Beam, whatever that means.

A decoder, receiver and dish were required, she said, but "unfortunately there are no domestic decoders available at present. This is mainly due to the fact that our manufacturers went into receivership late last year..."

Undeterred, the viewer, Mr Andy Waters, will continue to watch the BBC for free during the night when, he says, it is broadcast in the clear.


CORPORATION STREET W.1
An everyday story of broadcasting folk
"SO SKY HAVE OUTBIDDED US FOR THE FOOTBALL..."
SO EVERYBODY WILL NEED TO BUY A DISH...
SO NOBODY WILL WATCH IT...
ITV
SUE NOSEE
BAR
AND THE COUNTRY WILL LOSE INTEREST IN IT...
SO IT'LL BECOME A MINORITY INTEREST SPORT...
THEN SKY WILL STOP SHOWING IT...
SO WE CAN BUY IT BACK FOR PEANUTS!"
"Treble vodkas & Greavsie all round!"
TOY BOYS
Ken Pyne

AMID all the fuss about BKyB's football *coup*, no one has paid much attention to another amazing auction, that for ITV's Teletext service.

On 30 April the Independent Television Commission announced that it had followed the discredited rules of the Broadcasting Act and given the franchise to the highest bidder - Teletext UK, a consortium financed by Associated Newspapers and chaired by Sir David English, editor of the *Daily Mail*. But it now seems that the contest between Lord Rothermere's gang and the present holder of the franchise, Oracle Teletext, may not have followed Queensberry rules.

Last autumn, while deciding how high it could afford to pitch its bid, Oracle was tipped off by a reporter from the Press Association that its sales manager, Lawrence Lawson, was secretly working for a rival consortium. If true, this would have been disastrous, since Lawson had access to all the company's sales and expenditure projections. Challenged by his boss, sales director Robbie Alexander, Lawson flatly denied the charge. He stayed in his job.

It had been assumed that Oracle's nearest rival was a consortium put together by Carlton Commmunications and Intelfax. (Other contenders included TV-am and ITN.) But when the sealed bids were delivered to the ITC in January, it was Sir David English's Teletext UK that had outbid Oracle. Nor was this the only surprise. Teletext UK's proposals for staffing and organisation were uncannily similar to Oracle's own plans.

Over the following months, Oracle acquired overwhelming evidence that Lawrence Lawson was indeed working for the rival team, and on 30 April he was sacked for "gross misconduct". Just hours later, however, the ITC announced that Teletext UK had won the auction. Lawrence Lawson was immediately named as Teletext UK's sales director.

The ITC, which was well aware of Lawson's duplicity, apparently thought it acceptable. But then the Commission's own conduct has hardly been above reproach. The "quality threshold" requires that ITV teletext must provide a politically independent news service - yet the ITC has given the franchise to a company whose prospectus made it clear that much of its copy will be provided by the *Daily Mail*.

There is another oddity. All the tenders were delivered by 20 January. Since the ITC decided to award the prize simply to the highest bidder, it could have announced the result almost at once. Certainly the verdict was expected by the beginning of April - yet it was postponed until the end of the month. Why? Not, surely, because the ITC was afraid to reveal, just before a general election, that it was handing over yet more of the media to Tory supporters?

BEFORE last year's disastrous franchise auction, Scottish Television executives reluctantly donned "golden handcuffs". Worth a couple of million or so, the cuffs — so common on the ITV network — were apparently needed to hold on to key personnel and guarantee programme quality.

With its franchise retained at low cost, STV has been busy living down its image as a quality broadcaster. Last week 11 staff were sacked for being insufficiently viewer friendly — ie they were too old or ugly. In particular Colin MacKay, the station's respected political editor and a mainstay of its news programmes for nearly two decades, was abruptly axed with other similarly unyouthful hacks.

STV, to its credit, stressed that those put out to grass are not incompetent but merely too clapped out to survive in the exciting deregulated era of satellite and cable. Their dismissal resulted from recommendations made by a team of American market researchers, hired by STV to create a popular new image. The station intends to recruit replacements with more style who, apart from being younger and prettier, will have more flexible contracts (that is, they will earn less and be easier to fire). Husband and second wife-style presenters, with seriously expensive haircuts, are expected.

So far Gus MacDonald, STV's high profile boss who campaigned so vigorously for quality thresholds to hold back the barbarians at Sky, has proved unusually disinclined to discuss the sackings.

HACKWATCH No 23: The Sunday Times Books section

JOHN WALSH, who edits the *Sunday Times*'s Books section, prints a weekly survey of other newspapers' efforts at lit-crit under the pseudonym "Harvey Porlock". In February, studying the reception of Malcolm Bradbury's anthology *New Writing*, Porlock observed wearily that "other reviews followed a more predictable pattern. *Private Eye* attacked Bradbury and his East Anglian network."

Yet three months later, on 17 May, a whole page of the *Sunday Times* was filled with a breathless news story revealing the existence of a sinister literary network — Malcolm Bradbury and his colleagues and ex-students from, er, the University of East Anglia! Also "exposed" were the *Granta* mafia (Bill Buford publishes Martin Amis, Amis reviews Buford) and the *Telegraph* gang (Peregrine Worsthorne, Paul Johnson etc). All these groups have been written about for many years. But the *Sunday Times* waxed indignant at its belated "discovery".

To prove that the Books section of the *Sunset Times* is immune from such log-rolling and back-scratching, John Walsh then announced that in future all critics would be thoroughly cross-examined before being allowed to write for his pages. Have they met the author whose book they are reviewing? Have they ever had their own work reviewed by the author? Have they ever published a book on the same subject as the author? And so on.

If Walsh wants to eliminate any conceivable conflict of interest, however, he is going to have his work cut out. Here is the record of the *Sunday Times* book pages so far this year:

5 January: Rave review of *Loose nEds* by Ned Sherrin: "He weaves a brittle fabric of learning over transitory events... an ideal raconteur." *Loose nEds* is a collection of Sherrin's columns from the *Sunday Times*.

19 January: Shirley Lowe drools over Audrey Slaughter's novel *Blooming* ("a cracking good, old-fashioned love story"). The *ST* neglects to mention that Lowe is an old friend and colleague of Slaughter.

26 January: John Walsh's "Harvey Porlock" column is given over to a furious attack on the *Indie*'s book critic Amanda Craig, whose reviews are full of "critical clichés" and "gossip and blather". Walsh does not reveal that only one week earlier he had begged Craig to join the *ST*'s reviewing team — and was mortified when she turned him down.

The same issue has a rave review of Ian Thomson's *Bonjour Blanc: A Journey Through Haiti*. It does not say that Thomson is a regular feature-writer for the *Sunday Times* magazine.

2 February: Bryan Appleyard praises William Rees-Mogg's *The Great Reckoning* without disclosing that it was Rees-Mogg who gave him his first job in Fleet Street, on *The Times* in 1976. A rave review for Philip Kerr's *Penguin Book of Lies* ("hard to resist") fails to mention that Kerr is himself a reviewer for the *Sunset Times*, and that *ST* literary editor John Walsh was best man at Kerr's wedding last year. A similarly enthusiastic notice of Bill James's "superb" crime novel *Take* omits to add that Bill James is the pseudonym of James Tucker, for many years the Welsh correspondent of the *Sunday Times*.

9 February: Ecstatic review of Peter Millar's "masterly" book about Germany, *Tomorrow Belongs To Me*, fails to mention that Millar is a frequent contributor to the *Sunset Times*. Sniffy review by T. J. Binyon of a history of detective fiction, *From Bow Street to Baker Street*, does not reveal that Binyon is the author of a rival book on the same subject.

16 February: Marie Colvin casts a scornful eye over Patrick Seale's "obsessive" biography of Abu Nidal without mentioning that he is an old rival of hers: Seale was a Middle East expert at the *Observer* while Colvin was the *Sunset Times*'s Middle East correspondent.

23 February: Carolyn Hart (John Walsh's wife) enthuses over Sally Emerson's novel *Separation*. Does not mention that Sally Emerson is married to an editorial executive from Times Newspapers, Peter Stothard, and that both Hart and Emerson used to work at *Books and Bookmen*.

1 March: Lucy Hughes-Hallett praises Marina Warner's novel *Indigo* ("graceful... glittering") without mentioning that her own book *Cleopatra* was in turn praised by Marina Warner ("entertaining... thoughtful") two years ago. Praising Mordechai Richler's anthology *Writers on World War II*, Stephen Spender forgets to tell us that he himself has a poem in the book.

8 March: Delirious review of D.J. Taylor's novel *Real Life*: "This is a very funny novel; it is also a serious novel, and a very good one: definitely a runner to put an ante-post bet on for the Booker stakes." No mention of the fact that D.J. Taylor is a regular book-reviewer for the *Sunday Times*.

15 March: Praise for the paperback of David Owen's "readable and interesting" memoirs. No mention of the fact that the *Sunday Times* bought the book's serial rights last year.

22 March: David Spanier's book on gamblers, *All Right, Okay, You Win* is reviewed rather dismissively by A. Alvarez — who neglects to mention that he is the author of a book on the same subject, *The Biggest Game in Town*.

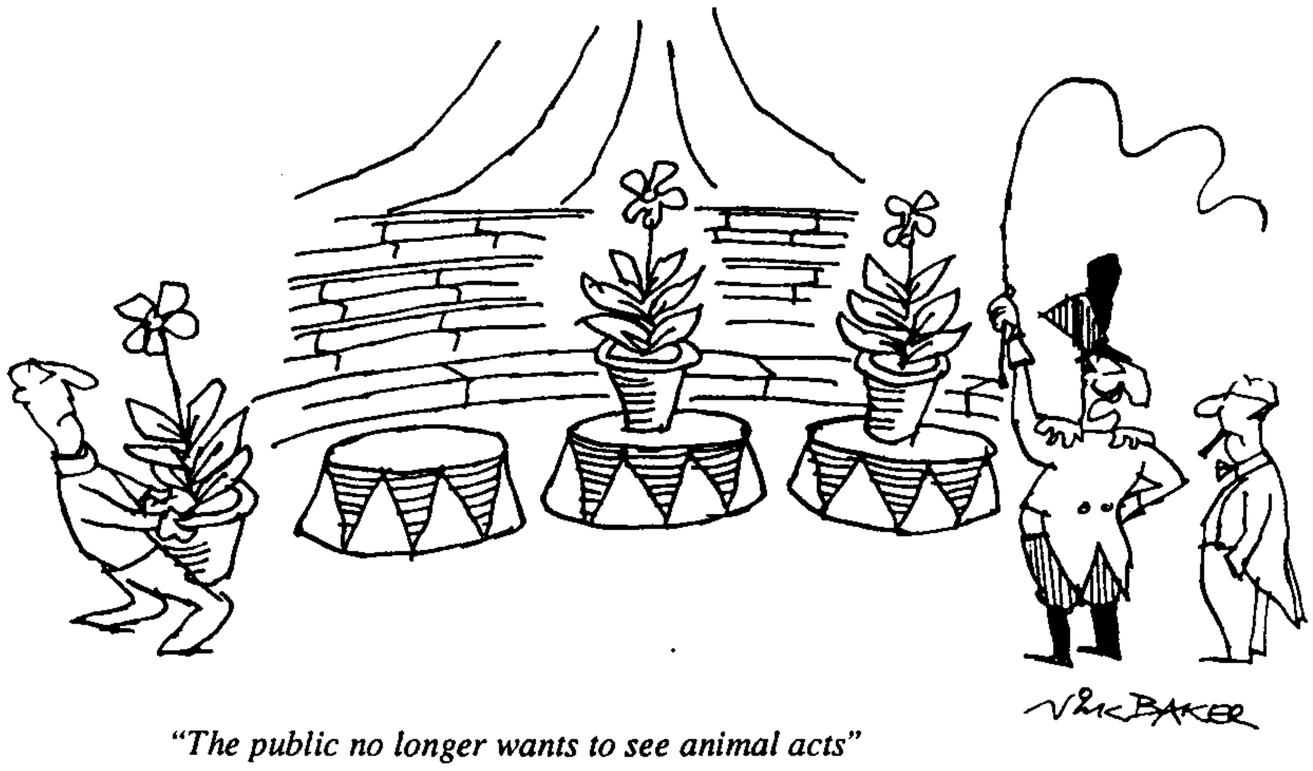
29 March: Clive Anderson reviews John Mortimer's *Dunster* — "an ideal entertainment". There is no mention that Mortimer is a stalwart of the *Sunset Times* books pages.

12 April: John Kelly praises *The Gonne-Yeats Letters* ("well presented and admirably annotated"), but forgets to add that the book's editor, A. Norman Jeffares, helped him when he (Kelly) was in turn editing *The Collected Letters of W. B. Yeats*, six years ago. Elizabeth Buchan, a romantic novelist published by Pan Macmillan, praises the latest book by E.V. Thompson, a romantic novelist published by Pan Macmillan.

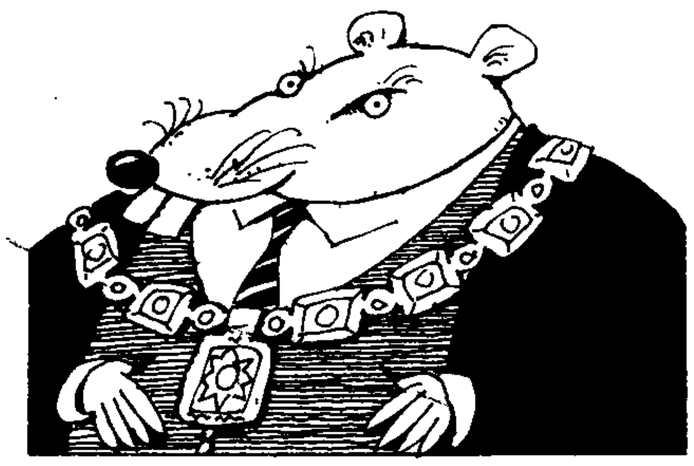
19 April: Rave review of *Yours Till The End* by Jackie and Sunnie Mann doesn't mention that the *Sunday Times* has invested a huge sum in serialising the book.

3 May: John Mortimer raves over Robert Harris's "compelling" and "exciting" thriller, *Fatherland*. Both Mortimer and Harris are regular contributors to the *Sunset Times*.

24 May: High praise for the "irrefutable artistry" of Philippa Gregory's new novel, *The Wise Woman*. No mention of the fact that Ms Gregory is herself a reviewer for the *Sunday Times*.



"The public no longer wants to see animal acts"



ROTTEN BOROUGHS

BIRMINGHAM

CHARITY bosses who turned a Birmingham job training centre into a clearing house for international commodity deals have been protected from scrutiny by a rapid closing of ranks among their chums in the city's ruling Labour Party.

Acafess Ltd, set up to teach carpentry, office and other skills to youngsters in Highgate, one of the city's most deprived areas, sacked all its staff and went bust with its finances in chaos after some of its deals went array.

Inexplicably, Gus William's, the charity's executive director, had used Acafess to organise a string of deals in a range of bizarre commodities. Papers obtained by the *Eye* reveal:

- Arrangements with a Mr Daniel Sparks for exports of rice to Sierra Leone — carried out in the name of Acafess.
- A deal between Williams and Allan Morris of St Vincent, West Indies, for the sale of sugar.
- A deal between Williams and Arking Pan African for trading in Iranian crude oil. The deal was arranged using Acafess facilities.
- A similar deal for Nigerian crude oil.
- A deal between Acafess Ltd and TAT Kirin Trading Company for trading in rice.
- A deal between Williams and another Birmingham company, Consumer Products Group Ltd, for the selling of Angolan Kaanchas (*What they? Ed.*) against US dollars.

Acafess also ran an Afro-Caribbean club next to its training centre. The club was notorious as a centre for drug dealing; but among staff it was notorious for the strangely low recorded takings at the bar.

Acafess finally collapsed when it ran out of money to buy wood for its carpentry trainees. Birmingham Training and Enterprise Council, which funded the course, cut off all funds and closed it down. All its workers are now out of a job — but Gus Williams, a member of the local Labour Party, has not been questioned on what went wrong or about the connection between his international deals and the collapse of Acafess.

Nor has anyone on the city council sought to discover where the city's money went or — most important of all — why on earth a job training scheme was involved in international commodity deals.

FIDDLES have always been part of Birmingham's municipal life, but now an unknown senior official in the schools music service has literally gone on the fiddle and ripped off the instrument fund for £50,000.

Auditors have discovered a series of faked invoices and cheque stubs, including a cheque to a piano tuner for £15 for which the stub had been altered to read £1,500. The tuner got his £15 — but who got the rest?

One man who might be able to point the baton at the culprit is the former head of the music service who was suspended on his full £30,000 salary last November and allowed to retire quietly in March with an annual pension of £11,000.

David Hammond, the chief education officer, says he reserves the right to take any "appropriate action" against Allen but everyone knows that it is unlikely, especially with Hammond's contract up for renewal this year.

It might prove rather awkward if councillors were to question the financial controls in a department which hands a blank chequebook to an officer and then carries out no checks on where the money goes for years on end.

HARROGATE

COUNTRY lovers will be pleased to hear that an environment department inspector has upheld Harrogate planners' refusal to grant planning permission for a nine-hole golf course at High Birstwith in Nidderdale.

The inspector said the golf course would have an "alien and incongruous" effect on the Yorkshire landscape. Well it might, but it would have paled into insignificance compared to its nextdoor neighbour, the Menwith Hill US spy base, whose huge eavesdropping "radomes" can been seen for miles around.

Ironically, the massive radomes which link the base to spy satellites are known by locals as "golfballs". Due to Britain's "special relationship" with the United States, Menwith Hill has never needed planning permission and a massive expansion has been going on for the past couple of years, blighting Nidderdale still further.

David Mills, whose golf course has been turned down, may well reflect on the old adage: "The law locks up the man or woman who steals the goose from off the common, but lets the greater villain loose, who steals the common from the goose."

LEEDS

WHY DID Leeds city council and Leeds United football club reject the lowest tender for rebuilding the east stand at the champions' Elland Road stadium?

While the contractor Wimpey has expressed concern that the winning bid was almost £1.5 million dearer than its own £4 million tender, Leeds Council, which owns the ground and has representatives on the club's board, blames concerns over crowd evacuation and poor visibility of the Wimpey scheme.

The successful bidder at just under £5.5 million was GMI. Doubtless GMI knows its football: the Leeds United vice-chairman Peter Gilman sits on its board of directors.

But as a city council spokesman said: "Mr Gilman played no part of any kind in the decision-making or the consideration of these tenders."

TOWN AND GOWN

FOLLOWING last year's pitiful attempts to crack down on joyriding in Blackbird Leys, Oxford's Inspector Knacker has found a softer target: the innocuous post-finals antics of the Brideshead wannabes in the city's High Street.

He has sent all undergraduates a letter that reminds them of "the limits of civilised behaviour" and carries the friendly observation that "Others feel nothing but contempt for the student body and the name of your University."

The letter goes on: "We live and work here throughout the year and *you* in a sense, are our *Guests*." The incensed "Guests", meanwhile, have reminded Morse that they both vote and pay poll tax in the city, and they are far from impressed by the chief superintendent's signature — "D.J. Lindley BSc (Hons)".

His missive does little to heal the historic town-gown rift, but it does raise one interesting question: will the yobbish joyriders of Cowley receive similar letters beseeching them to "avoid a repetition of last year's disgusting behaviour"?

ULSTER NEWS

AS SECURITY forces gear up for Ulster's annual "marching season", problems associated with one of last year's parades have only just been resolved.

A court in Magherafelt has heard how plans for a march by the loyalist Royal Black Institution didn't go to plan. A small group of youths of a different political and religious persuasion were seen tearing down the bunting and union flags which accompany such events. Outraged locals phoned the march organiser, a Mr Robert Overend, who decided to take direct action even though the police were already investigating the incident.

Driven by his son, Mr Overend began searching for those suspected of interfering with the bunting. Having sighted a likely group, according to the prosecution, "a shotgun was produced and pointed out through the window [of Overend's vehicle] at the youths who were there. The youths appeared to back off and the jeep was driven towards them. The police then heard a shotgun being discharged."

Nobody was injured in the incident and the RUC quickly confiscated the firearm which, according to the defendant's solicitor, had been discharged accidentally. Mr Overend was freed on police bail until his appearance at a special sitting of the magistrates' court last week, where he admitted unlawful possession of a loaded shotgun and ammunition.

This was not the most serious charge that could have been brought and it resulted in just a £200 fine. As it happens, Mr Overend is a local justice of the peace, and he will no doubt be similarly lenient should he find himself passing sentence on anyone else firing a shotgun at a dispersing group of teenagers, none of whom was charged with any offence.

WORLD OF HYPE

INTERNATIONAL public relations consultants Hill and Knowlton (see *Eyes passim*) have laundered the reputations of an impressive list of clients: from Baby Doc Duvalier's Haiti and the People's Republic of China, to Adnan Khashoggi and BCCI.

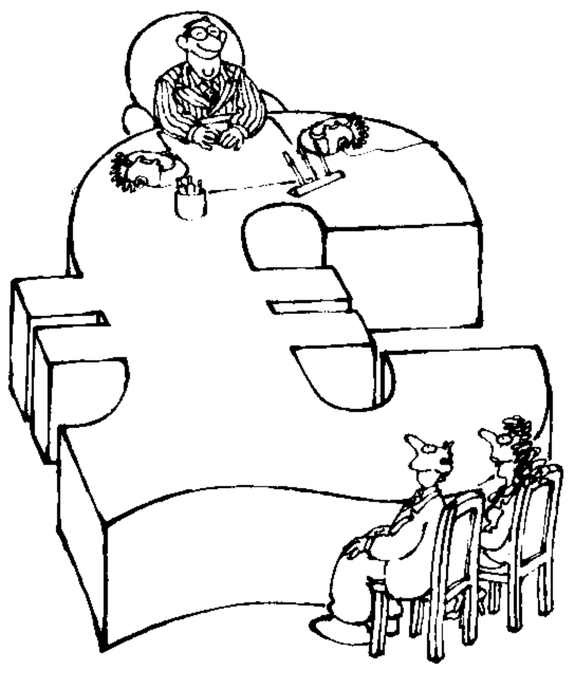
It thus comes as no surprise to learn that the firm — inventor of the notorious Kuwaiti baby incubator story during the Gulf war — is now working for the Scientologists.

The Hubbardista sect, the most litigious cult of all, has now launched a law suit against Eli Lily, the drug firm, because, the Hubbardistas claim, it tried to use its influence to stop Hill and Knowlton taking the "church" as a client.

The Scientologists want $15 million from Lily, which is petty cash compared with the $418 million they want in libel damages from *Time* magazine for its recent exposé of the cult. They will lose the case, of course; but no doubt Hill and Knowlton will be able to show the defeat in a positive light. After all, the world is full of suckers keen to bankrupt themselves while being regaled with the products of L. Ron Hubbard's fertile imagination.

HUSBAND
'Scuse me sir, is this your car?
Er.. No I stole it
Then you'd best accompany me me to the station
Can I ring my solicitor first?

BANKERS



EXPLAINING its overdraft charges, the National Westminster bank says: "If overdrawn at any time during the charging period there is a quarterly charge of £20." For unauthorised borrowing, which includes borrowing in excess of one's agreed level, there is an added charge of £30.

Are these charges, which come on top of the generous interest borrowers already pay the bank, reasonable? One reader does not think so. He exceeded his overdraft limit for just one day — until his monthly salary cheque was paid in — and was very put out to find that his account was debited with bank charges of £50.

He complained to his bank manager in writing and received a robust reply: "I am afraid that I cannot agree with you that the charges we have applied are unreasonable. I think it is quite clear in all our advertising that your account is run 'free if in credit'. It is also quite clear that if you use the credit zone facility [a euphemism for overdraft] that we make available you will pay the charge for it. Our agreement and offer does not make any reference to the amount involved or the length of time involved, it is simply the cut-off point at which you pay the charges for the service we provide."

Further remonstrations brought some softening on the part of the manager. "You must of course recognise that the fees passed do form part of our published tariff — however, as a gesture of good faith and recognising that the excess borrowing only occurred for one day, I am, on this occasion, prepared to refund half the fee."

Since these charges can burn a great hole in one's pockets, why not try the following ruse? If you pay a cheque into your National Westminster account on a Monday, it normally clears by the following Thursday. If, however, someone pays in a cheque from you on that same Monday it hits your account on Wednesday. The clever thing to do, therefore, is to pay a cheque in at any branch other than your own in which case the cheque is credited to your account on Wednesday thus possibly avoiding the unfortunate £50 charge.

● *All horror stories involving high-charging high street banks and building societies gratefully received.*

O·B·N

I also admire the way that Esther [Rantzen] has made herself over. When I first knew her back in the 1960s, she struck me as dark-haired, on the dumpy side, and made rather plain by her buck teeth. By some process of willpower and application, she then metamorphosed into a long-legged, blonde, strong beauty whose large mouth and teeth became both a focus of sensuality and a cutting metaphor of power.

MARY KENNY
Evening Standard

Submitted by Chris Watmore.

£10 paid for all entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.

THIS ENGLAND

BRITAIN'S heritage is under threat again... this time from the busybody anorak-wearers of the "heritage industry".

For 150 years the railway works in Swindon, Wiltshire, were home to first-rate craftsmanship, engineering skills being passed down from generation to generation. When the works closed in 1980, it was not surprising that some should try to preserve a small slice of that heritage for posterity.

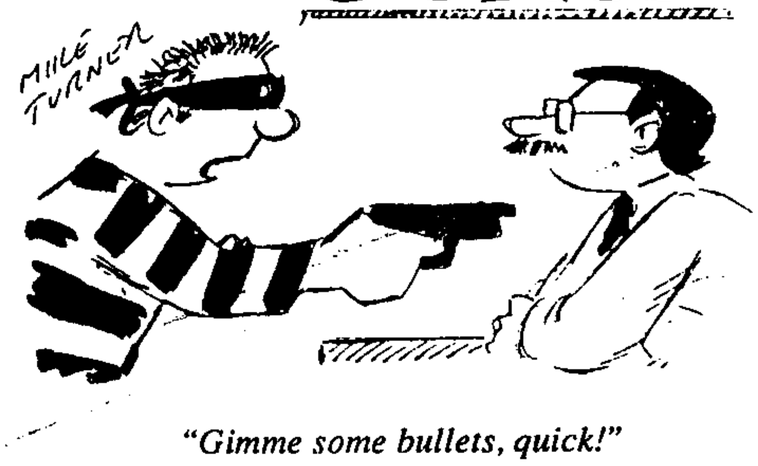
With the blessing of the site owner, Tarmac Properties, a dozen or so former railway employees stayed on to make bits and bobs for Britain's remaining steam engines in the No 20 shop, where just such skilled work had been carried out for donkeys' years.

Tarmac is now evicting the craftsmen to make way for a... *heritage centre*. In its drive to create a museum just like hundreds of other museums, Tarmac seems unable to recognise that live, working craftsmen are more interesting "heritage" than yet another gleaming inanimate locomotive.

The men declined to move to a site in the No 9 shop because, they argued, their project was only worthwhile if it continued the engineering tradition in its original setting and using original equipment and techniques.

But that is not all. The insensitivity of the heritage fanatics seems to know no bounds. They also plan partial demolition of one of the site's listed buildings which, most galling for the town's proud former railwaymen, will make room for a... multi-storey car park. And who will use the car park? Why, none other than the future occupants of Brunel's managers' offices — the staff of The Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England of course.

GUNISM



"Gimme some bullets, quick!"

DOWN ON THE FARM

with 'Old Muckspreader'

BROADCASTERS and newspapers were unanimous: Ray MacSharry, the European Commissioner for Organised Crime (Farming), in one bound had freed us from the mega-preposterous common agricultural policy (CAP).

Of course the truth could not be further from the ministry line that was dutifully peddled by the hacks.

The MacSharry plan to deprivilege farmers and remove their subsidies involves, er, *increasing* their subsidies by 40 percent until 1997 when they will be renegotiated.

And the commission has *not* agreed to lower its tariff walls. They protect us from the immorality of cheaper non-EEC food, and without them anyone in Europe who eats food would be a lot better off.

MEANWHILE, far from the Gatt talks and CAP evasions, Washington's Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has conceded a victory that may finish off conventional — ie gissa subsidy — farming once and for all.

The FDA has now approved genetically engineered foods, which will be on the Safeway shelves of the United States within the year. Jacques Delors and chums will not long be able to bar them over here.

The US authorities have nodded approval for an ICI-developed tomato that does not rot. By removing the enzyme polygalacturosnase from tomatoes, a vegetable is created that is tastier, cheaper and lasts longer than the natural one. The FDA says it anticipates the new genetically-engineered food lines will displace conventional husbandry within 15 years throughout the West.

The British food fascists who are opposed to us eating anything dirty or enjoyable are even more alarmed at foods that are clean and enjoyable. Be prepared for a harvest of nutty food scares. Mankind has done well for 3,000 years on the three bacteria of yeast, cheese and yoghurt. If the FDA is right, we already have the know-how to replicate these ten times over.

THE pretty village of Stormontfield in Perthshire is usually a sleepy place where brain death was thought to be endemic. Yet for four or five weeks of the year it is a noisy unhappy place where everyone is sneezing or weeping or both...

The answer, as in all country matters, is the result of a daft subsidy: Stormontfield is almost entirely surrounded by acres of luminous yellow oil seed rape fields. Scientists called in to help the sneezing villagers have identified a disorder akin to hayfever but with much more painful headaches and coughing.

The landowners, naturally, think it is rewarding to grow this alien crop as the nice kind EC and agriculture minister John Gummer engineer subsidies to grow more of it.

THE citizen's charter unit in the cabinet office has invited Mr Gummer to tea and buns on 19 June, when he is to be asked what ideas his agriculture department has to give us a better deal on farming and food.

Lady Judith Willcox, who has done her own bit to bring us better fish supplies and who can out-score Gummer on loyalty to the Church of England, is telling friends it will either be a very short meeting or a very long one. What can she mean?

OLD MUCKSPREADER mocked Lymeswold cheese at its birth and cannot fail to sneer at its death. It pre-deceases its parent, the Milk Marketing Board and Dairy Crest by a few weeks.

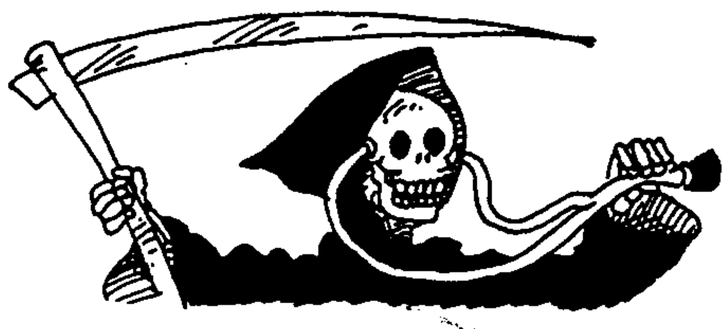
Wensleydale, Dorset vinny, Lanark blue and the other native cheeses the MMB has tried to drive out of the trade have a few months' breathing space.

Fortunately the new food act will give the inspectorates new powers to suppress deviant cheeses. Mr Gummer may not be an evil man — he is close to the archbishop — but he is certainly a weak and foolish one.

Old Macdonald

ALBERT

I SEE THEY'RE OPENING ONE OF THEM NEW BURGER BARS NEXT TO THE BLACKSMITHS
BURGER BAR!!
WE DON'T WANT A BLOODY EYESORE LIKE THAT CLUTTERIN' UP THE HIGH STREET! THIS VILLAGE HAS GOT CONNECTIONS WITH OLIVER CROMWELL! JUST WAIT 'TILL I GET MY HANDS ON THAT PLANNING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN!
Ye Roundhead Massage Parlour
HE'LL BE OUT IN TWENTY MINUTES!
NO CREDIT
albert



DOING THE ROUNDS

SURPRISE! Surprise! The suspiciously blue BMA central consultants and specialists committee has dropped active opposition to the NHS reforms. "This is not a change of direction," claimed meandering chairman Mr John Chawner, ably supported by GP Peter Holden who said: "It's time to silence the revolutionaries." MD's days are surely numbered...

● GORGEOUS, pouting health secretary Virginia Bottomley faces only sporadic pockets of resistance in her bid to conquer the caring professions — but the resistance is uncomfortably close to home.

Subversive husband Peter, Tory MP for Eltham, has tabled a Common's motion in an attempt to save his local hospital, the Brook. He faces weeks without nookie or a hot supper if he doesn't recant.

● **SOUTH WEST** regional manager Catherine Hawkins is famed for the size of her scythe. Regarded by members of the SW board as "not very intelligent but vindictive", her reign of terror started with the "relocation" of two medical officers, Martyn Reynolds (to Hull) and Alastair Mason (to Crimboland).

She recently sacked **Exeter's** pharmacist manager Tony Knowles for being too nice to the medical staff, before despatching the manager of **North Devon Hospital**, a certain Mr Walker. A modest 14 consultants have now left North Devon before retirement age, and another in **Yeovil** faces the sack.

● NEW HEALTH minister Brian Mawhinney is chewing the cud over whether to discipline rebel **Kingston-upon-Thames** GP Michael D'Souza for his refusal to comply with the Government's completely useless three-yearly patient checks.

Mr Mawhinney is still trying to solve the mystery of his son's new year's eve tonsillectomy. Mawhinney minor was 14th in line for the operation but rocketed to the top of the list, apparently because the other 13 didn't turn up.

● ATTEMPTS by the **Oxford** clinical trials unit to end confusion over the safety of lipid-lowering drugs have met resistance. The study is trying to confirm whether or not such drug treatment lowers mortality from heart disease at an increased risk of early death by cancer or violence. Curiously, the unit is having trouble recruiting volunteers.

● MANAGERS at **North Middlesex NHS Trust** are riding a wave of popularity after renting out a car park near staff sleeping quarters to an early morning Sunday market. When members of the staff protested to the traders, they were treated to some disrespectful hectoring.

● BACK in February, the trust board at the skint **Manchester Central Hospital** decided "to exercise the most stringent financial control by maintaining stock levels at the minimum safe level". Further cash was raised by upping the parking charges to 60p a visit. But the trust still risks a telling off for breaching the patient's charter, which insists that patients attending casually should be greeted and assessed within 15 minutes by a named nurse ("Hello, I'm Sister Sunshine. My, that's a nasty finger"). Sadly, inadequate staffing means many patients wait five hours for their welcome.

● NO CHARTER mark, either, for **Weston Hospital**, where casualty patients queued for four hours on 23/24 April. Having been caught out closing the hospital prematurely to emergencies to protect lucrative non-urgent hernias and cataracts, the trust vowed not to do so again. It simply closes the hospital to GP admissions, forcing all emergencies to slog it out in casualty.

● **NORTH Staffordshire District Health Authority** has a cunning ruse to avoid blotting the waiting list statistics. The Government's "two years or less" operation pledge only comes into effect once the patient is officially on the list and doesn't include time taken to an initial appointment. Prospective Staffordshire outpatients now receive a DHA letter stating: "I do not wish to give you a definite date for your appointment at this stage. I will write to you again in approximately 18 weeks giving you a precise date and time. That letter will give you about four weeks' notice of your appointment." Elsewhere, the wait for an appointment in the impotence clinic at **Bristol's Southmead Hospital** is a mere 70 weeks: ample time to construct an amusing wordplay on Godot.

● THE SAGA of the **Taunton Hospital** helipad continues. On 24 April the organ donation team was advised not to land on it. The pad is the brainchild of acute services' manager John Chester, who took "expert advice" from the RAF before the navy refused to land on it. Not only is it too small and too close to the hospital, but it now boasts a perimeter wall and landing lights facing the wrong way.

● MANAGERS at **Yeovil Trust Hospital** have been busy with their calculators. After a money-spinning glut of hip replacements was recorded, it was decided to appoint another orthopaedic surgeon to cope with the extra workload. It wasn't until after the appointment they realised their error. Many patients had been counted twice, once at operation and again on admission to **Crewkerne** or **Sherbourne Hospitals** for rehabilitation.

● **MIDDLESEX Hospital** has closed a dermatology ward because of a lack of "purchaser demand". Surgically frustrated GPs now prefer to hack away at blemishes in the comfort of their own surgeries, a dubious practice that has lead to an upsurge in litigation and missed melanomas.

● OPHTHALMOLOGISTS in **Leicester** have been accused of frustrating patients into having their cataracts removed privately. The patients, usually elderly and uninsured, are given gloomy accounts of the NHS queue before the subject of a private operation is casually suggested. One private health firm charges £600 for a single night's bed and board; the operation (theatre, surgeon, anaesthetist, dressings and drugs) is extra. Having decimated the life savings, the second eye is graciously done on the NHS. After all, one doesn't want to appear greedy...

'M.D.'

ELECTION NEWS

H. ROSS Perot, who may soon officially declare his candidacy in the United States presidential elections, is attracting a lot of media attention and not all of it welcome.

When the *Eye* revealed that he had once proposed in all seriousness an original way of dealing with the dope problem, several American newspapers and hacks got on to the story. One, a freelance called Frank Snep, a former CIA agent and author, wrote to Perot and asked about his hiring Special Forces personnel to intercept drug dealers.

Snep wanted to write a piece for *Playboy* and the *Los Angeles Times*, but Perot responded by fax that he knew nothing about the story. Perhaps it is time to remind him.

In the last year of the Carter administration, Perot, who loathes the dope industry with a passion, put forward a loopy *Rambo*-style proposal to the Drug Enforcement Agency: to use armed undercover operators who would pose as dealers or buyers, seize the cash and dope, burn the smugglers' aircraft or sink their boats before doling out rough summary justice to the traffickers themselves. Perot claimed his scheme would rid the Caribbean of dealers and be self-financing.

In November 1980, Reagan took over the White House and the Republican administration quickly dropped the scheme. If Perot's memory fails him, perhaps he should talk to Major Richard Meadows, Major Charles Oderessi, Sergeant Ronnie Franklin or Major George Petrie, all former Special Forces personnel who were on the Perot payroll at the time. If he needs to be reminded of the dope dealers involved in the scheme of betrayal, he could talk to Ronnie Lusk, a pilot who flew dope for the Flower family in the Appalachians, or Lusk's customs handler, Special Agent Don Winkler, now retired. And if all else fails he might like to listen to the tapes or see the photographs.

Perot might not want to talk to or about these people, but others do. The *Washington Post* and *Philadelphia Enquirer* are preparing long articles on Perot's potty plan.

As the Texan billionaire moves ever closer to the White House, it should be remembered that he made his first million by providing computer services to the very same US government agencies he now denounces so loudly and to such public approval.

His company, Electronic Data Services (EDS), was bought by General Motors, but here in Britain it still follows in its master's footsteps: two of its most important contracts are with government departments handling the tracing of absent fathers and student loans.

HUNT NEWS

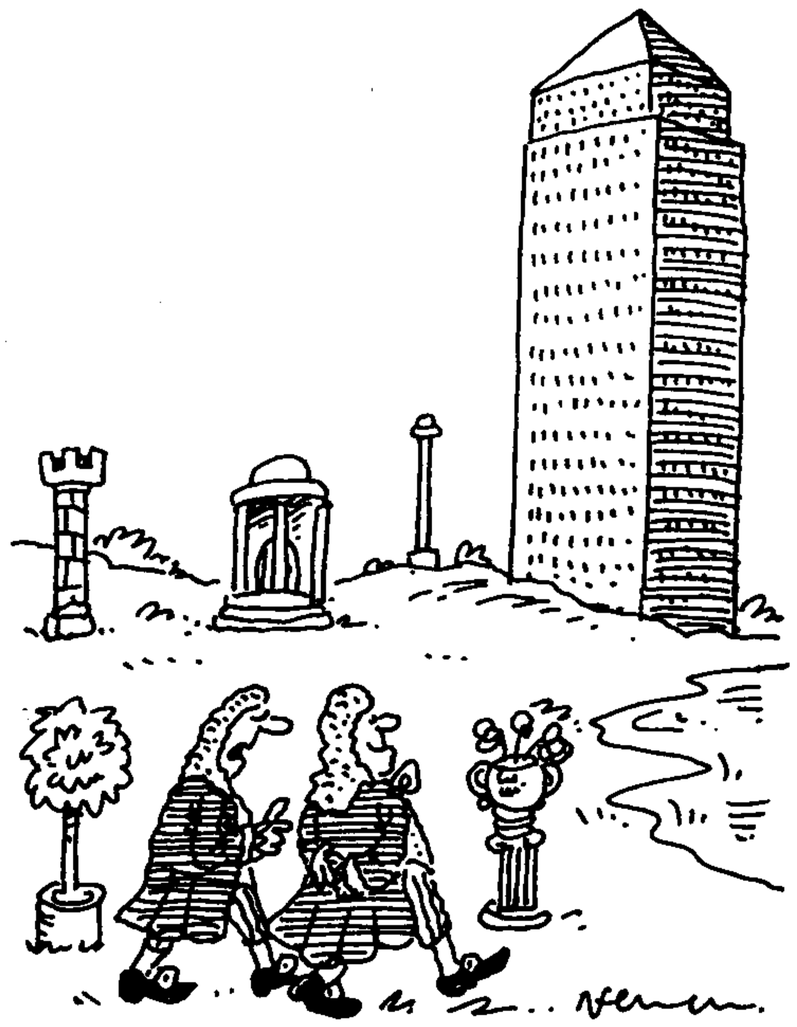
A RECENT weekend outing by the Milton Keynes hunt saboteurs ended with two nasty incidents in which several saboteurs were injured.

On the Saturday, the saboteurs tracked the Northamptonshire mink hunt to Godmanchester, near Huntingdon, and effectively forced it to return the dogs to their kennels. The next day, however, the hunt was ready for the saboteurs. About 30 heavies emerged from a van and a man and woman and their two children, who had perhaps ill-advisedly accompanied the saboteurs, found themselves under attack.

The man was punched in the face and smashed across the legs with a stick. His nine-year-old daughter was pushed over, and one of the thugs appeared to be about to hit the man's son who was pulled out of the way just in time. Various saboteurs, who suffered head wounds and weals across the back from the sticks, were treated at a hospital in Huntingdon where the police arrived to take photographs of their wounds.

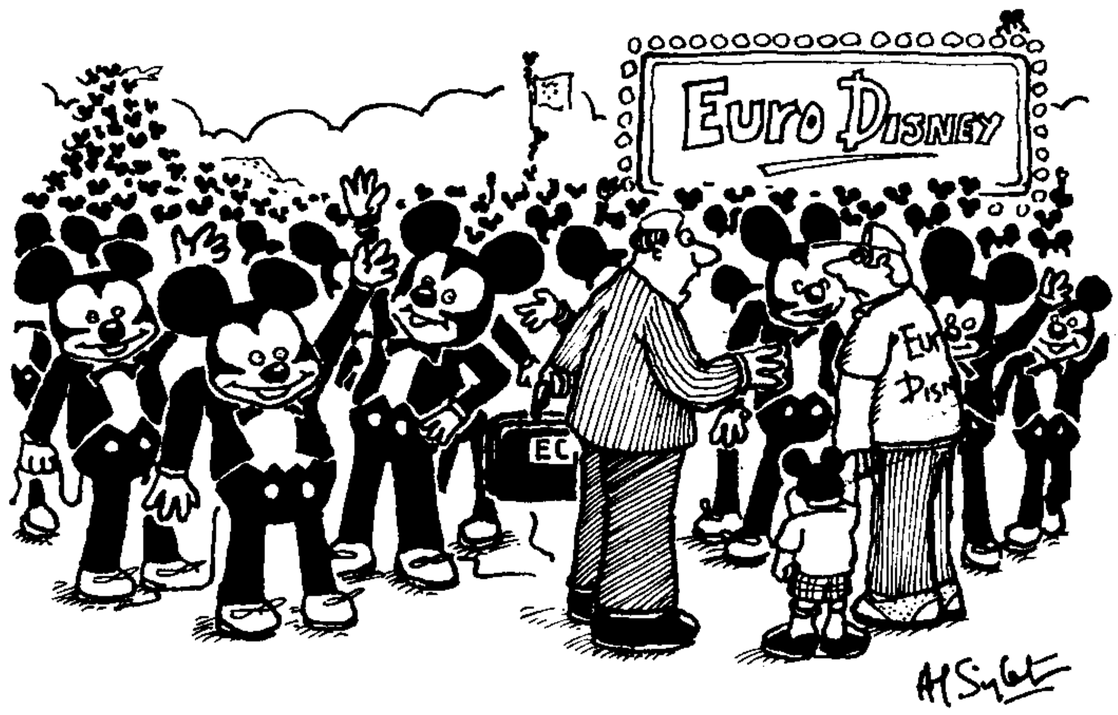
Later, there was another incident on Bury Lane, off the B1043, in which a hunt supporter drove his car at a saboteur, knocking him to the ground. The blow apparently damaged the car's windscreen and some of the saboteurs were able to give a clear description of the vehicle to the police, which was confirmed by an independent witness who was cycling past when the hit-and-run attack took place. The police declined to take any written statements.

'Reynard'



"There are follies and follies, My Lord"

Letters



"Typical! We've got a Mickey Mountain!"

Muslim Aid

Sir,

Your item in the "Grovel" column (issue dateline 8th May 1992) makes serious allegations against Muslim Aid and two of its trustees (Mr Yusuf Islam and Mr Tanzeem Wasti).

The item is riddled with inaccuracies. There has been only one such critical report, not reports as your article states. At no time was money raised in Britain for aid purposes used to purchase arms; quite where the figure of £80,000 mentioned in your article comes from perhaps only Messrs Dodwell and Darby know. So far from refusing to take action Yusuf Islam himself went to Peshawar upon receipt of Mr Darby's "critical report" to investigate. The comments made by Mr Darby were termed inaccurate by the staff of Muslim Aid's office in Peshawar and no evidence of misuse of funds was found. Muslim Aid has ensured that charitable funds are specifically used for education and hospitals taking all reasonable precautions for this purpose.

I would therefore ask that you publish a retraction in your next issue giving it as much prominence as the offending article, as a measure to go some way to repairing the undoubted damage that this article has done to our reputation as a responsible, well respected organisation working to relieve poverty and suffering in the world as well as to educate children in the very difficult circumstances which prevail.

Yours sincerely,
BRENDAN MADDEN,

Executive Officer, Muslim Aid, London N7.

Over-exposed

Sir,

I refer to J. David's letter on "dioxinitis" (EYE, *22 May).*

Groups of scientists from throughout the world, including my co-workers and I, have shown that dioxin exposed subjects with and without chloracne have various metabolic changes which can account for at least some of the deaths which have occurred following dioxin exposure. Dioxin-exposed subjects following the Seveso incident were shown to have an increased incidence of soft tissue sarcoma, a malignant, ie potentially fatal, tumour. All this work has been published in the open reputable scientific literature, ie it is serious science. J. David seems to define serious science as an extrapolation to entire dioxin exposed populations of his own atypical insusceptibility.

DR J.V. MARTIN,

Bollington, Cheshire.

John et Julie

Sir,

Your report on the libel action against John McDonnell was uncharacteristically generous compared with past coverage of left Labour figures.

What it lacked, however, was information whereby readers, appalled by the blatant injustice of the problems facing John and Julia (his Camden Labour councillor partner), could show their support through financial donations to the "John McDonnell Appeal", c/o 3 Hanson Rd, London W1P 7LJ.

No sum is too large, but, er, basically, £55,000 is needed by 16 June, or the threat of homelessness is even greater.

Given the ridiculous nature of England's libel laws, no one seriously considered calling the appeal the Dicksballs Fund, despite the warm-hearted spiritual generosity and enlightened social attitudes normally associated with John's widely respected and much loved Tory opponent in Hayes, Terry Dicks.

Yours sincerely,
DAVE HORAN,

Camden Labour Group Secretary, London NW1.

Slightly foxed

Sir,

The "Hunt News" column sinks from boring to mindless repetition with each issue. I'm surprised it hasn't told of how hunt followers regularly use machine-guns to exterminate troublesome hunt saboteurs and then bury their bodies in mass graves in some anonymous wooded area, and how at this very minute Tory hunt followers are debating the creation of gas chambers as a final solution to the hunt saboteur menace — though it can surely only be a matter of time before these atrocities crop up in "Hunt News". And I can hardly wait for it to be revealed in "Hunt News" — inevitably — that foxes have gone to social workers with allegations of sexual abuse at the hands (and hounds) of the satanically minded foxhunt.

Yours tiredly,
DANIEL WILKINSON,

Eltham, London.

Lookalike

Anthony Burgess

Old Git

Sir,

I wonder if any of your readers have noticed the remarkable resemblance between Harry Enfield's brilliant comic creation, the Old Git, and the distinguished man of letters Anthony Burgess.

Are they by any chance related? I think we should be told.

Yours,
JEAN LEYLAND,

Brighton.

Mistrust

Sir,

Re 'Doing the Rounds'.

As there are several Trusts in London, it is perhaps understandable that you should confuse them. However, I should be grateful if you would make it clear to your readers that the Trust referred to in issue 794 (22 May 1992) as having secured its future by a deal to open a street level McDonalds is not this one.

Yours sincerely,
T.P.V. BATTLE,

Director of Operations, Royal London Trust, E1.

Satirical nature

Sir,

Re 'Doing the Rounds' (EYE *792)*

The above article was inaccurate about the formation of this Trust and I would therefore wish you to put the record straight.

Southmead Health Services NHS Trust (NOT *Southmead Hospital Independent Trust) came into being on 1st April 1992 and comprises acute and community health care services not only at Southmead Hospital, but also at a number of other centres in the locality.*

Whilst we recognise the satirical nature of PRIVATE EYE, *this organisation is appalled by your article's personal and discrediting attack on Dr Peter Harrison who is a well respected Clinician at Southmead Hospital.*

Yours faithfully,
S.C.DAY,

Acting Chief Executive, Southmead Health Services, Bristol.

Manual labourer

Sir,

As the victor in the election on May 7 which saw the downfall of Vicki "Queen Victoria" Roberts, I can report that Vicki accepted her defeat with the equanimity and good grace for which she is so renowned locally. Presumably because some of my election leaflets hit on something close to the truth, she refused my proffered handshake saying: "I don't shake hands with people who tell lies." That should minimise manual contact with most of the local Labour politicians. Alas we were not regaled with "Always look on the bright side of life" by the Militants. We had to make do with "Bye bye Vicki" sung to the tune of "Pompey Chimes". I almost felt sorry for her — but not quite.

Best wishes,

CLLR. PAUL CLEIN,

Liverpool L7.

Any road up

Sir,

Backbiter's column concerning Maggie's "brave attempt to help beleaguered traders in Marple Bridge, Manchester" which "backfired majestically" is, very simply, poorly researched journalism. Local traders had indeed made proposals for reductions in their rating assessments because of the detrimental effect of the collapsed road. Backbiter continues "sure enough the Inland Revenue did review the shops' bills [rating assessments actually] and promptly INCREASED *their business rates after finding a range of undeclared structural alterations."*

The true facts, which Backbiter could have checked, are that all but ONE *of the traders received reductions in their rating assessments.*

What did Aesop say? Something like "beware that you do not lose the substance by grasping at the shadow".

Yours etc.,
MILES W. HARE,

Didsbury, Manchester.

I-SPY

Taipei Airport

Submitted by Dov M. Hamburger. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Eau no

Sir,

If Cologne is a "smoking industrial tip" (Rotten Boroughs, EYE *793) then what, pray tell, are Bristol, Sheffield, Glasgow, Leeds, Liverpool, Salford, Coventry, Manchester, Bradford, Birmingham, and indeed much of Greater London?*

Your disapproval of Bromley council is no reason to malign one of Europe's most interesting and attractive cities. Cologne is also, by the way, graced by a particularly pleasant pedestrian area. The problem with Bromley is the lack of Rhine.

Yours faithfully,
JONATHAN WATKISS,

Korntal, W. Germany.

Bono fide

Sir,

I was greatly impressed by your "Diary" article on Edward ("Lateral Thinking") de Bono. In 1974, my ex-company sent me on one of his courses at a posh hotel in Kensington. At lunch, I informed the Great Man that I was really impressed by his operation, which appeared to consist of getting people who had paid to attend his courses to solve problems that companies had paid him to solve. Unfortunately, he seemed to think I was taking the piss and refused to speak to me again. This was a great pity, as I really did admire his scam.

Yours sincerely,
G. HUNT,

Bebington, Wirral.

Bomber command

Sir,

I was struck by the resemblance between the USA, that is imposing sanctions on Libya so it will send those suspected of unlawfully killing the passengers in the Lockerbie tragedy to Britain for a proper trial, and the USA that is refusing to send the airmen accused of killing soldiers in the Gulf, since it will become a "media circus".

Are they perhaps entirely unrelated? I think we should be told.

Yours faithfully,
MIKE CRANG,

Hotwells, Bristol.

No

Sir,

Did anyone notice the remarkable resemblance between your article on the West Midlands regional health authority (Rotten Boroughs EYE *794) and... your article on the West Midlands regional health authority (In the Back* EYE *794)?*

Are you running out of stories and originality? I think we should be told.

Yours not ad nauseam,
ROB CHANEY,

Canterbury.

Yes

Sir,

Did anyone notice the remarkable resemblance between your article on the West Midlands regional health authority (Rotten Boroughs EYE *794) and... your article on the West Midlands regional health authority (In the Back* EYE *794)?*

Are you running out of stories and originality? I think we should be told.

Yours not ad nauseam,
ROB CHANEY,

Canterbury.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"Australia must now climb to the top diving board for a last desperate throw of the dice."
BOB WILLIS, Sky Sport
(Michael Meyer)

"I looked at it and saw, at once, that it was a can of worms in a nutshell."
PAUL BOWER, BBC2
(S. Hayes)

ELTON WELSBY: *Magnifique, Eric.*
ERIC CANTONA: *Oh, do you speak French?*
WELSBY: *Non.*
ITV
(John Mottram)

"The car is the only means of transport for the rural motorist"
ROAD HAULAGE INDUSTRY SPOKESMAN, Radio 4
(Bill Norman)

HOM SAP

BY DAVID AUSTIN

WE HAVE BEEN BETRAYED!
THE POLICE KNOW ALL ABOUT US. READ THIS.
A-BUNCH-OF-INADEQUATES-WHO-POSE-NO-SERIOUS-THREAT.
SECRET POLICE REPORT

Letter from

Japan

from Our Own Correspondent

IF POACHERS make the best gamekeepers, our government should do a wonderful job as the self-professed guardian of the world's environment.

Believe it or not, this is the intention following the failure of George "The Environmental President" Bush to take a lead. Despite, or perhaps because of, its appalling environmental record, our government is keen to deflect criticism and has recently been staging publicity stunts to support its case.

First, we held the prestigious CITES (Convention on Trade in Endangered Species) conference in Kyoto earlier this year. That was followed by the self-proclaimed Eminent Persons' Meeting on Financing Global Environment and Development. And finally, Fukuoka city hosted the Club of Rome Conference.

As PR exercises, however, each of these events proved sadly vulnerable to sod's law. First, there were red faces during the CITES conference when a shipload of smuggled elephant ivory turned up at Kobe docks as the delegates were about to debate endangered elephants. A few days later, when the subject turned to bears, it was disclosed that a bear park in Hokkaido had recently slaughtered 95 of the creatures. And the only positive commitment made by our government to limit the catch of dwindling bluefin tuna has now been quietly dropped.

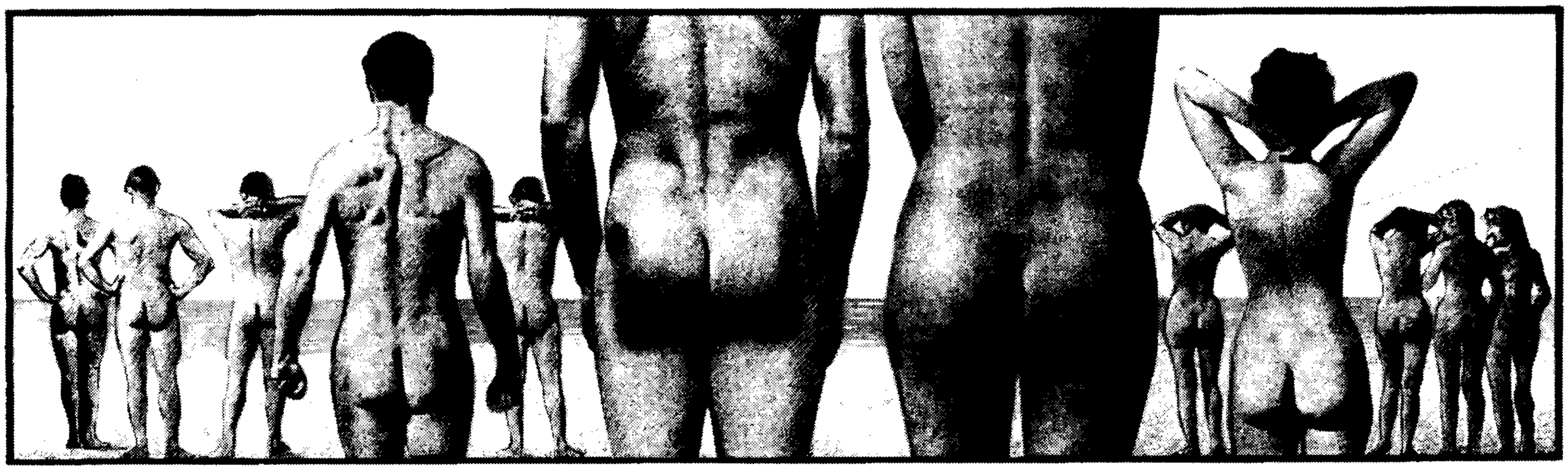
Next, there was the three-day Eminent Person's Meeting hosted by ex-prime minister Noboru Takeshita, an eminent person not previously noted for his record on the environment. Also present was ex-prime minister Toshiki Kaifu, who was neither born with eminence nor achieved eminence, but woke up one morning after a succession of political scandals and sort of had it thrust upon him. Finally, there was a roll-call of eminent persons as long as Pinnochio's nose, including several ex-national leaders. The whole bash was financed by a group of mysterious industrialists: presumably with Takeshita's construction company friends, the biggest consumers of tropical timber, prominent among them.

The result of this self-congratulatory platform was, not surprisingly, a lot of grandstanding but very few concrete proposals for action. A document called the *Tokyo Declaration* was so devoid of substance that even the national newspapers were able to print it in full without the slightest fear of controversy. Still, for those who felt like throwing up at the Eminent Persons' Meeting, at least they weren't short of ex-prime ministers' laps on which to do it.

Finally, there was the Club of Rome. These poor innocents, who wrote the visionary book *Limits to Growth* 20 years ago, had no idea of the degree to which they were being manipulated when they held their conference here. Despite the fact that Fukuoka city council puffed itself up by declaring that "the problem of our planet is one of the gravest concerns throughout the world", at the same time it was facing international criticism for planning to destroy a wetlands area west of the city, which is a vital stopping point for dozens of species of migrating birds.

The mayor of Fukuoka has ignored a 120,000-signature petition to halt the project, and countered charges that it was hypocritical to take credit for an environmental conference while planning to destroy a unique natural environment by declaring: "We did not hold this conference to give priority only to the environment."

All of these public relations events were, of course, part of a run-up to the Rio Earth Summit. Our government and multinational companies may be tearing down rainforests and plundering the oceans, but they're not too busy to find time to try to persuade people that they care.



THE COURT heard Constable George Wilkins say: "I saw a man, who turned out to be Mr James Sprinkle, driving a milk float with reckless negligence down Cambourne Hill. Several drivers had pulled over to avoid his zig-zagging.

"At first I could not keep up with him but, when the float reached the flat, I drew near, jumped off my bicycle, and arrested him by running alongside the float. He shouted: 'I will not stop. I am mad for speed!' But soon after that he crashed into the back of Mr Arthur Jenkins's hearse."

DURING his interview, Mr Joseph Mariscal of Sevile, the Chief Brother of the Christian Grandfather's Union, said: "We decided to refurbish the four angels that decorate the corners of Grandfather's Float for this year's Easter Parade. They did not arrive until the evening before, and then we discovered that sexual reality in the form of male genitals had been added to their divine forms."

His deputy, Mr Jesus Carla, said: "Not only had the angels been made male, they were extremely well hung. Very obvious, indeed. They could, in fact, have been wearing condoms."

Defending his firm's action,

CHRISTOPHER TS LOGUE TRUE STORIES

Illuminated by BERT KITCHEN

Mr Joaquin Bellido of Carmen Art Workshops said: "It is true that the angels had penises, but they were VERY SMALL penises. And the stories in the local newspapers that they were erect are false. Whoever heard of an angel with an erection? We are artists, not fools."

"AFTER SIX years of complete mismanagement by the State farming authorities, I called for a demonstration by Bangalore's agricultural community as a whole," said Mr M.D. Nanjundaswamy of the Karnataka Farmers Association.

"About 20,000 people turned up and marched to the State Legislature. Then, at a signal from myself, we all began to laugh and we laughed aloud for two hours. When we began to tire, we changed to whistling."

VIEWERS of Marandando Television, a local station broadcasting from Davo in the Philippines, were amazed when the two local Chiefs of Police, Captain Renato Aguda and Chief Inspector Alfreado Pacubas became so heated during a chat show that they drew their pistols and shot it out while on camera.

The captains were discussing crime prevention," said Miss Angelica da Santos, the producer of the Get To Know Your Public People *show. "Captain Aguda was recommending the re-introduction of the death penalty for almost everything, and Chief Inspector Pacubas wanted to restrict it to murder. Quite without warning, they reached for their pistols and began to fire. Captain Aguda died instantly and the Inspector is still under Army guard in intensive care."*

A SPOKESMAN for the editors of the current *Mountain Accidents Report* has confirmed that after three separate groups of fell walkers had told their rescue team that cries for help were coming from the north side of Rydal Mount, 15 members flew to the area and found an outing of the Church Ramblers holding an outdoor hymn service.

"WHEN the local nudists decided to have a midnight picnic in Noosa National Park, we churchmen did not object," said Dr Gerald Rowlands of the Australian Assemblies of God.

"But now Mr David Short of the Sunshine-Coaster High Horizon Night Club has inaugurated the Rear of the Year show, and 50 bare-bottomed female nudists and 50 bare-bottomed male nudists displayed on Mooloolaba Beach.

"There was almost continual applause and jeering and the winners bared for a second time again after they had received their prizes.

"This activity should be banned."

INFORMATION: West Britton and Royal Cornwall Gazette 10.10.91; YA/ABC 12.3.92; Toronto Globe & Mail 23.3.92; Manila Sun-Star 29.12.91; Westmorland Gazette 20.3.92; Brisbane Mercury 26.1.92.

MONITORS Russell Bennett, "Rolleston", Brendan J. O'Byrne, A.K. Chuck, Phil Hare, Norman Reynolds.

LUVVIES

Roger and I worked together on *The Magic Roundabout.* One day I just got a sort of Dougal blindness and I yelled for help and he came. Roger has the proper child's eye view: he pulled me back a lot when I was flying off on slightly more adult stuff.

NIGEL PLANER (describing his brother)
Sunday Times Magazine

The experience of an actor's life is what appeals to him — "Wonderful things can happen to you, but you have to be prepared to jump from a plane with no parachute, so to speak." He clenches a fist dramatically. "If you close your hand so nothing can slip from your fingers, nothing will get in either."

ALBERT FINNEY
Daily Telegraph

Submitted by F. Wheen, E. Strobes.

An occasional column featuring gems from the acting profession. £10 paid for entries printed.

HURD AND MAJOR

by P. G. Wodehouse

(Saxophone music)

MAJOR *(sitting in armchair reading Daily Telegraph)*: I say, Hurd, what's this Bosnia Hercegovina business all about? Dashed complicated, what?

HURD *(polishing teapot)*: Not altogether, sir. To anyone familiar with the unhappy history of the Balkans, the situation is only too comprehensible.

MAJOR: But, dash it, Hurd, who are all these johnnies who seem to be so keen on bumping each other off all over the place — Serbs, Croats, Moslems, Bosnians? And what about the Hercegovinians? No one ever seems to mention them.

HURD: Indeed, sir, it does seem a curious oversight.

MAJOR: But, dash it all, Hurd, we can't just sit around while these birds take pot shots at each other.

HURD: Indeed we can't, sir. It is a most unfortunate state of affairs.

MAJOR: So you mean, Hurd, someone should step in at once? Friend Bush, for example? Or even yours truly?

HURD: Oh no, sir. That would be most unwise. I would strongly advise against any precipitate action of any kind in this matter, sir.

MAJOR: So you mean I don't do anything at all?

HURD: On the contrary, sir. You must do something at once.

MAJOR: Well, what?

HURD: You must tell everyone that something must be done at once.

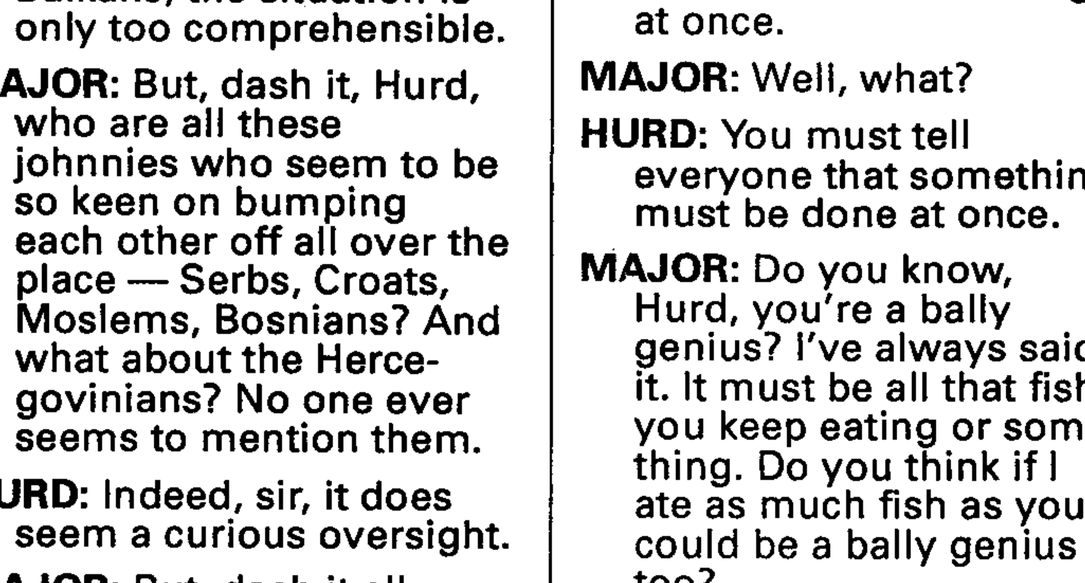
MAJOR: Do you know, Hurd, you're a bally genius? I've always said it. It must be all that fish you keep eating or something. Do you think if I ate as much fish as you I could be a bally genius too?

HURD: I'm afraid, sir, that I very much doubt it.

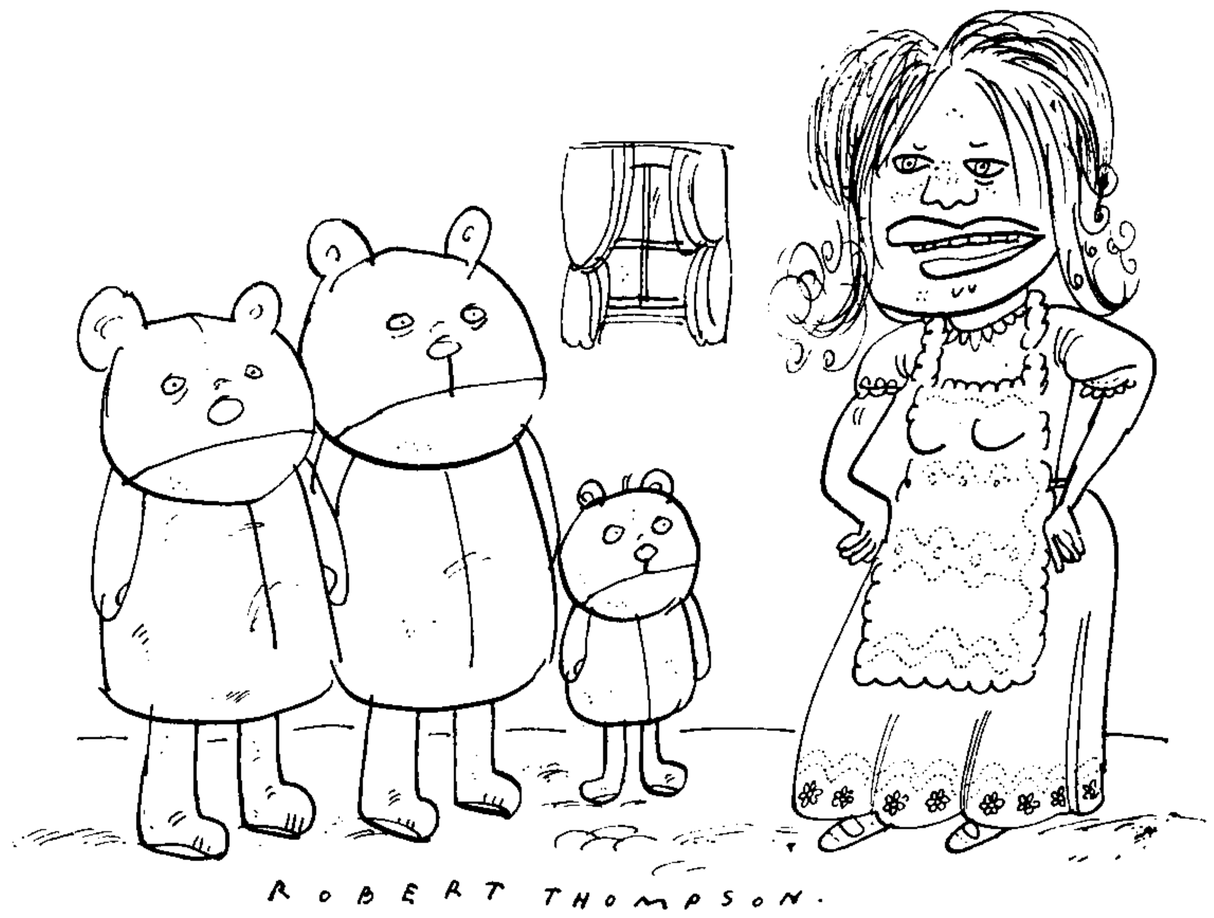
MAJOR: Oh well, jolly good, Hurd. I'd better tootle down to the Drones for a spot of lunch with Oofy Mellor.

The End

NEXT EPISODE: Hurd explains sanctions.



"Are you staring at my bird...?"



"Typical. You wait ages for a bear, then three come along at once"

Great Moments in Poetry Revisited

OZYTHATCHIAS

By Percy Bysshe Sparty

I met a traveller on the Jubilee line
Who said: A vast tower of concrete
Stands in the Docklands. Near it lie
Idle cranes and empty offices.
And on the pedestal these words appear:
"My name is Ozythatchias,
Supreme Ruler of the Universe.
Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair."
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,
The lone and level sand and cement
Mixers stretch far away.

'MR CLEAN' HEADS NEW ITALIAN GOVERNMENT

by Our Italian Correspondent **Alessandro Chancellore**

AFTER 16 years without a President, Italy has at last chosen a new head of state — believed to be the only man in the country who has no links with the Mafia.

He is 89-year-old Mr Francesco Alberti Sinatra, an elderly singer from the United States.

Asked how he would approach the job of being Italy's 849th President since the war, Signor Sinatra said: "I will do it my way — or, as we say in Italy, Cosa Nostra."

Miss Mussolini is 36-24-38.

HUGE GAS ERUPTION THREATENS PLANET

by our man in Rio **Lunchtime O'Zone**

THE FUTURE of the planet was threatened yesterday when a vast emission of hot air began to erupt at the Earth summit in Rio de Janeiro.

Scientists blamed the sudden release of the gas on thousands of politicians and civil servants from all over the world, simultaneously demanding that something should be done, but not by them.

Gas-Burning Bush

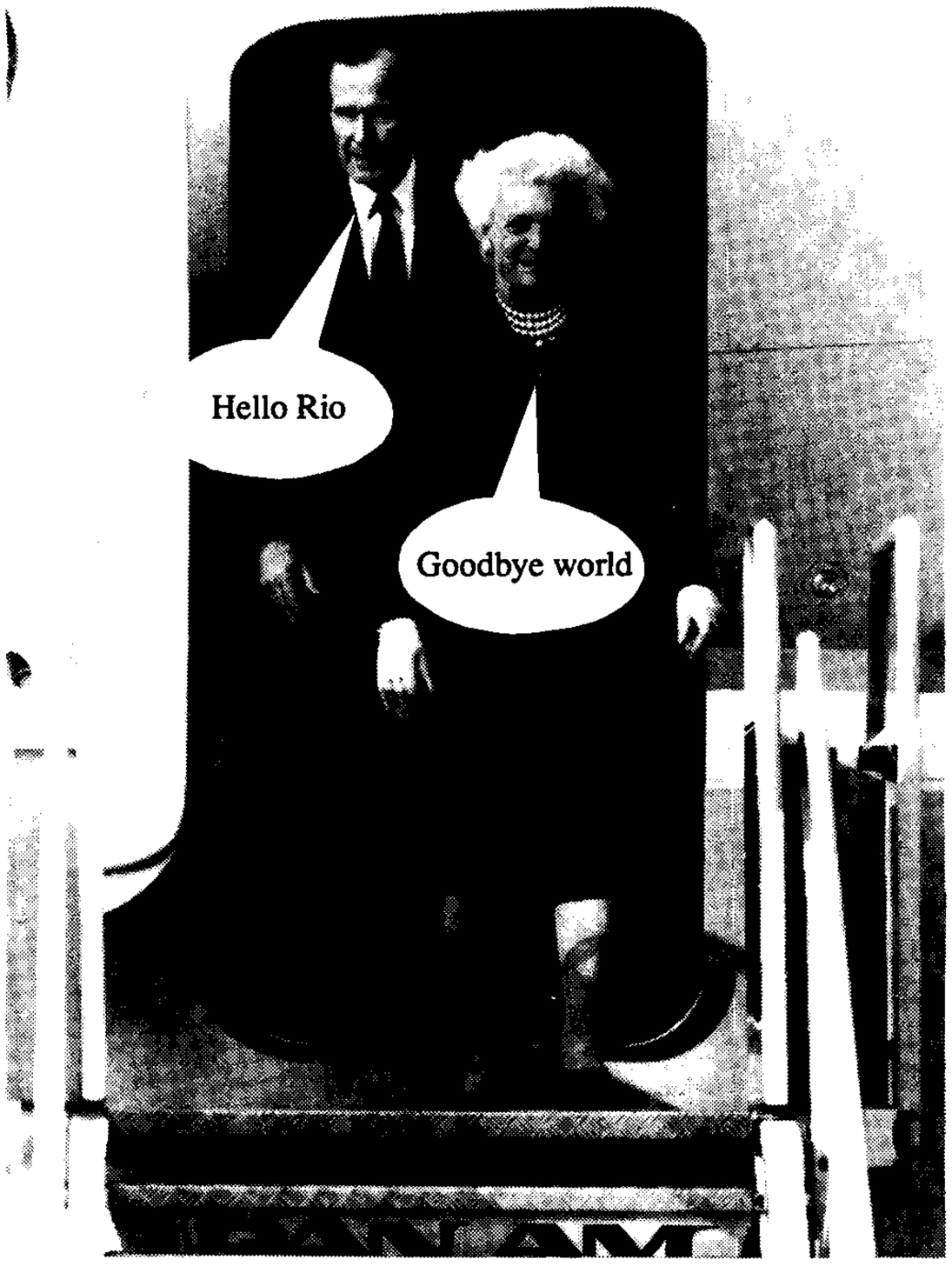
One principal source of the toxic rubbish was George Bush, who emitted a colossal 78 billion cubic hectares of lethal fumes in the course of a ten minute speech.

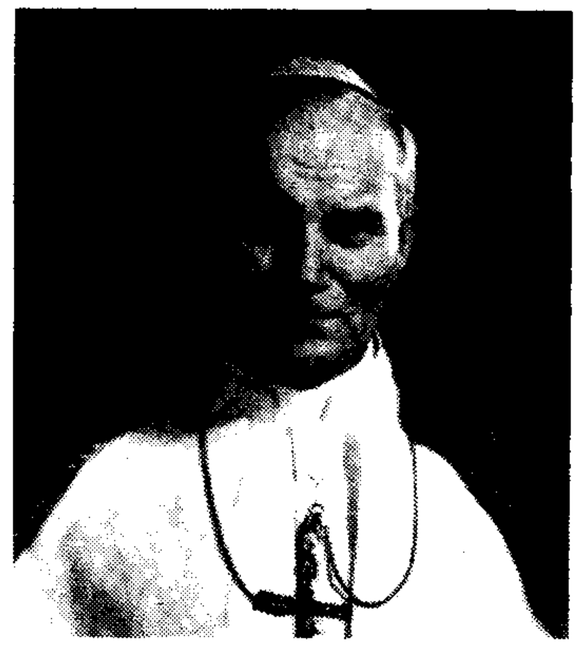
According to one eye witness: "It was terrible. The planet will never recover. He opened his mouth and this stuff just came out."

Analysis of the contents of the Presidential emission revealed a quantity of Bushshit *(shurely 'Bullshit'? Ed)* well above the permitted level. There were also strong traces of Hokum, Flannel, Cowardice, Soft Soap, Electioneering, Stupidity and Monosodium Glutamate.

Bush, however, was not the only offender, with over three thousand other sources contributing to the huge mushroom cloud above Rio which environmentals warn is threatening to do nothing at all at any stage.

BUSH FLIES IN





Let's Pargliamo Italiano

by Kilometra Kingtoni

No. 94: Meeting the Pope
Benvenuto al Vaticano!

POPE: I am Il Papa. Who are you?

ARCHBISHOP CAREY: Bongiorno. Dove Il Papa, per favore?

POPE: Sono Il Papa, idioto.

ARCHBISHOP CAREY: Scusi. Eco multi salutari di Chiesa Anglicari.

POPE: Grazia. Arrividerci. Have a nice giorno!

CAREY: Uno cappuccino, per favore.

POPE: Dominus vobiscum.

CAREY: I beg your pardon? Now about these women priests...

(Exit Pope)

© The Gnomophone Parliama Italiano – The Easy Way Cassette Course.

MODERN NONSENSE RHYMES

Hey Diddle Diddle

The Fat Cat's on the fiddle.

Murdoch is over the moon.

The watchdog failed to stop the fun

And the Dish ran away with the football.

© BSkyB (Highlights of this Nursery Rhyme are available on the BBC)

The Daily Hellograph

FRIDAY, JUNE 5, 1992

Mad old woman runs amok in revenge attack

By Brian Close, Our Man in Salisbury

"I HAD to get it out of my system and now I feel much better. That woman has ruined my life but I'm glad to say I've got my own back at last."

The speaker is a florid-faced old lady who is clearly deeply bitter about her treatment at the hands of "another woman".

She is Mrs Moaner Heath, 86, who for some years has lived alone in a 42-bedroom Wiltshire mansion, surrounded by mementos of her happier past, when she was prime minister.

"I could not stand it another minute," Mrs Heath told waiting newsmen yesterday. "For eleven years I had to put up with the sight of her, living in my house, occupying my favourite seat in the House of Commons and flaunting herself just like a brazen hussy.

"Not that I wish to seem vindictive in any way. I never begrudged her her little moment of glory. If she enjoyed being thought of as the leader of the Tory party, then good luck to her.

"But when that woman began to insult my good friends the Germans, I did what any red-blooded Englishwoman would have done in my position.

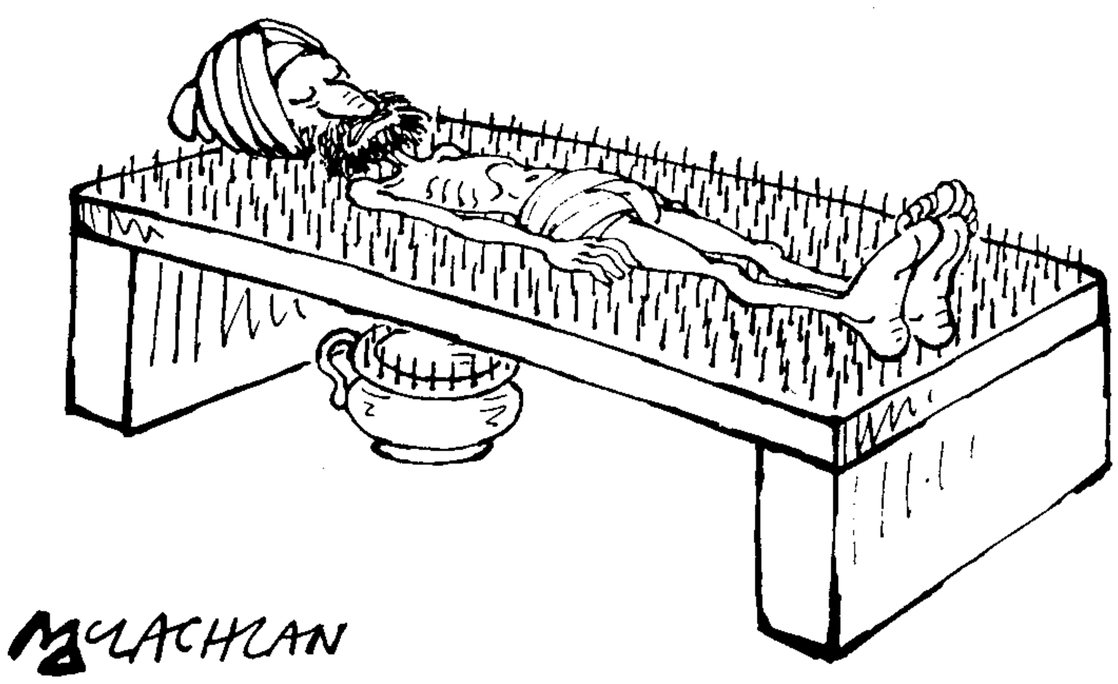
"I went round to her house in the middle of the night and sprayed 'Maggie Out' on the garage door. I also went to the House of Commons and told her just what I thought of her, to her face.

Unfortunately she was not there any more. But I can tell you, I got a big kick out of it, all the same. I feel much better now, boo hoo hoo."

Mrs Heath was then taken away by a group of carers.

Mrs Heath is 92.

CHARLES DROUGHT SPEECH



5 JUNE ● THE SUNDAY TIMES

TOP TEN BORES

This Week		Last Week	Weeks On List
1	Nigel Mansell	1	31
2	Nigel Kennedy	7	54
3	Nigel Planer	–	–
4	Nigel Pratt-Dumpster	3	1,379
5	Nigel Lawson	6	324
6	Nigel Havers	10	3
7	Nigel Hawthorne	–	–
8	Nigel Rees	4	391
9	Nigel Clough	–	–
10	Nigel Nicholson	25	7

This week's Bores compiled with the help of BSkyB

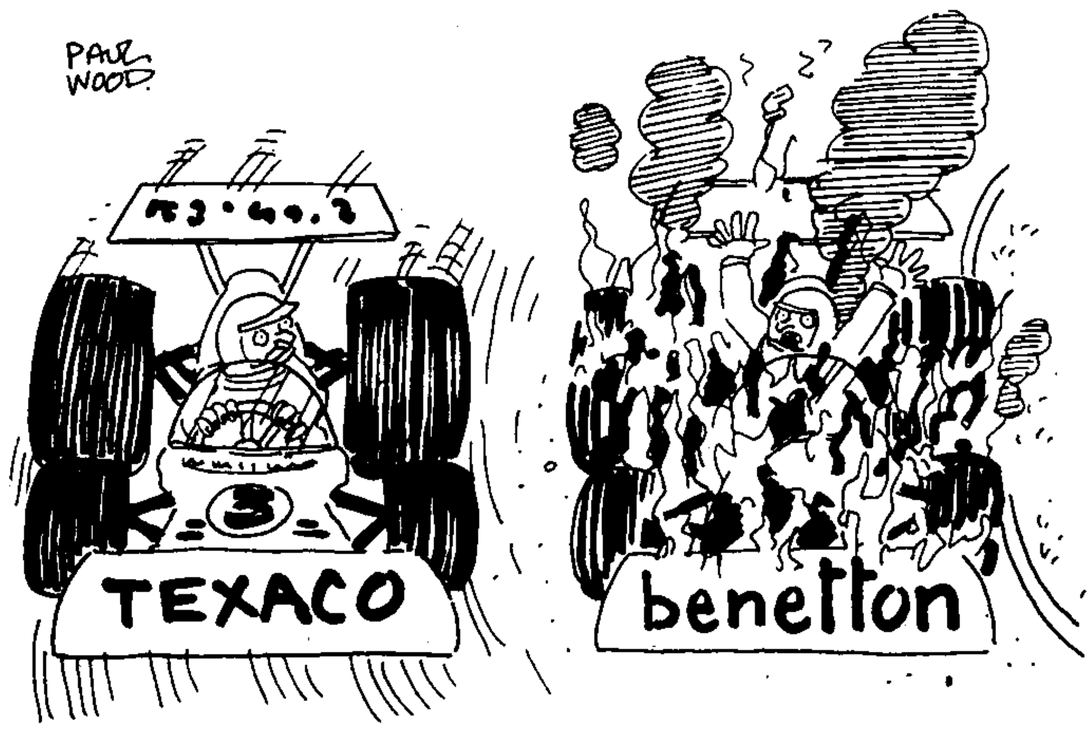
8.30 **ANGLO-SAXON ATTITUDES.** 2/3.
Exceptional drama series based on the A N Wilson's equally exceptional novel.
The Independent

Burial and Cremation Manager

Up to £18,000

Kettering Borough Council is moving towards a No Smoking Policy

Advertisement



That BBC Luxury Hotel Weekend Menu in full

Breakfast

Choice of Cereals (Neighbours, EastEnders, Home and Away)

Porridge (repeat)

— ❋ —

Egg on Face

— ❋ —

Birt Toast with Orange Marmaduke and Rantzen Butter

— ❋ —

Lunch

In the Soup

— ❋ —

Portland Plaice with M.A.S.H. (repeat)

or

Tusa Fish Salad

— ❋ —

Peach Mellor

— ❋ —

Cheese Board of Governors and Home-Made Pickled Botney

— ❋ —

Drinks: Broadcasting House Wine, Janet Street Port (Old Ruby Non-Vintage, 1931)

— ❋ —

Tea

1 Slice Cake Adie with pot of TV Centre

— ❋ —

Dinner

That's enough menu, Ed

Checklands will not be accepted
Public service is not included

Rushdie shock for booklovers

by Our Literary Staff **Nigel Dumpbin**

HUNDREDS of booklovers were shocked at yesterday's Wye-on-Wye Literary festival when Mr Salman Rushdie failed to make an unscheduled appearance.

Fans had been queuing outside the Andrew Neill BSkyB Marquee since 11 o'clock in the morning for an advertised discussion on "The East European Novel In The Post-Marxist Era" between Miss Sarah Dunant and Mr Michael Ignatieff, hoping to catch a glimpse of the world's most controversial novelist.

"I have a good mind to ask for my money back," said one Wye-on-Wye book fan. "Mr Rushdie makes surprise appearances at every other festival and literary event. Why not Wye-on-Wye? I ask. Not good enough for him, I suppose. If you ask me, there ought to be a fatwa against him. It's the only language people like him understand."

Mr Martin Amis is 46.

Today's Highlights at Wye-on-Wye

11 a.m. "Coffee with Johnners"

Cricket commentator Brian Johnston signs copies of his new book, "I Must Have Told This One Before".

Sponsored by the Merrypin Cider Co.

12.30 p.m. "Me and My Money"

Peter Ackroyd talks about the influence of money on his literary output.

Sponsored by Old Sinclair-Stevenson's Organic Fertiliser ("Where there's muck there's Sinclair-Stevenson")

1.00 pm Grand Literary Luncheon

Guest celebrities: Bel Mooney, Frank Delaney, Bernice Rubens and Benny Green. Mr John Mortimer unfortunately cannot be present, due to the fact that he is at six other literary festivals today.

Sponsored by Old Mother Waldegrave's Country Kitchen

3 p.m. Cartoon Workshop

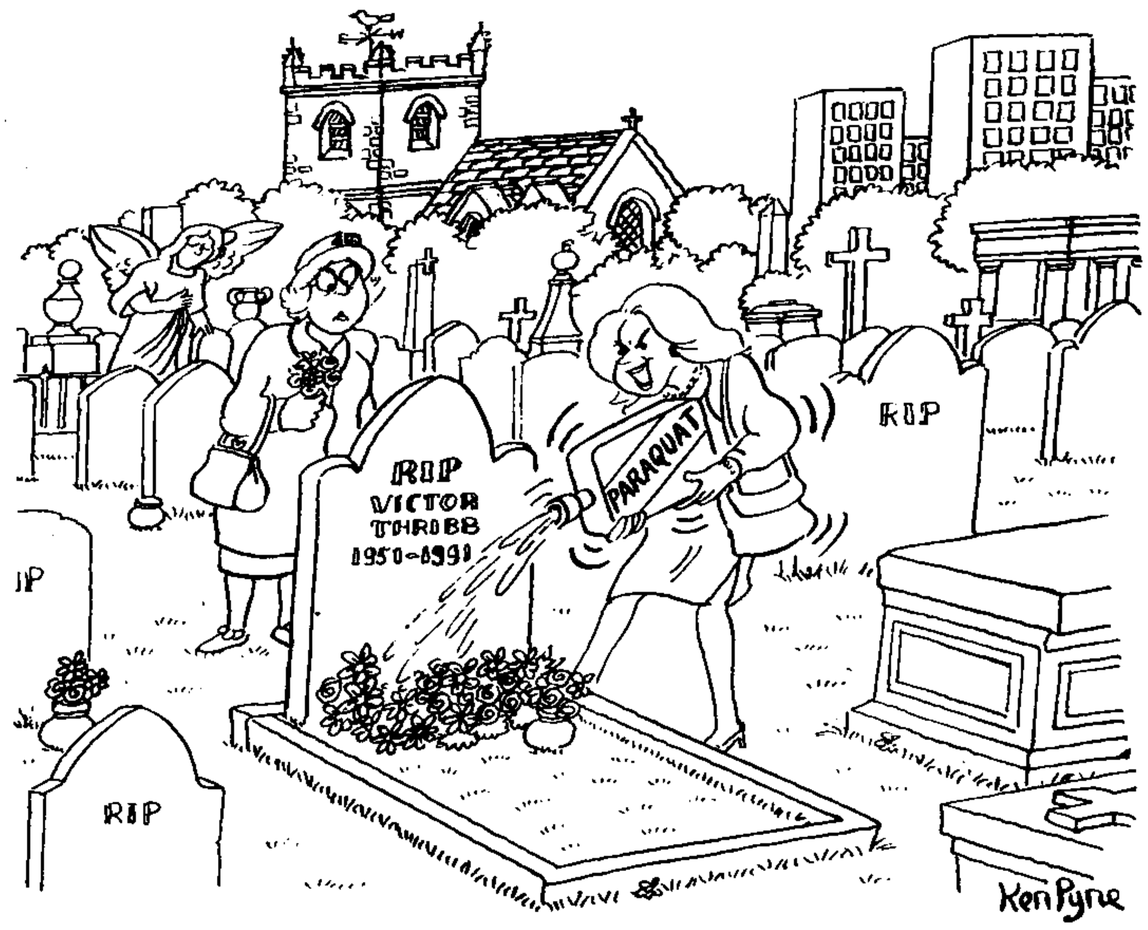
Some of Britain's leading cartoonists (Mel Calman) show local children how not to draw.

8 p.m. Jazz'n'Poetry at the Masonic Hall

Michael Horovitz reads new poems about the Sixties from his new anthology "Terrible Poems Of The Sixties", accompanied by Michael Horovitz (kazoo). Special Guest Star: Salman Rushdie.

Sponsored by The Adult Video Shop, Wye-on-Wye.

NEXT WEEK: The Call-Nick-Ross-on-Wye Arts Festival (events in full)

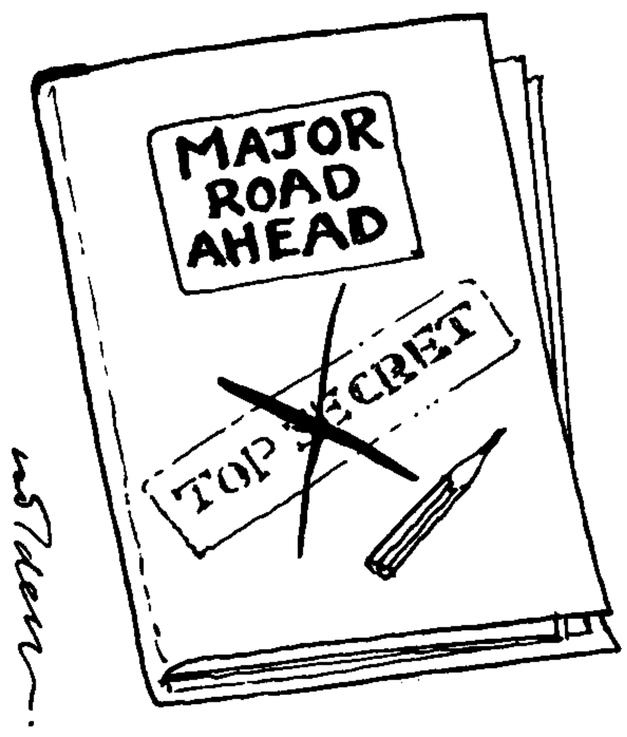


"It's what I had left over from putting in his coffee"

The Secret DIARY OF JOHN MAJOR aged 47¾

Monday

Today marked another very important step in what everyone is calling Majorism. From now on we are to have completely open government. For example I have told Mr Waldegrave that he can announce all the names of the people who sit on our top secret Cabinet committees. I was pleased to see that not only was I on every one, but I was chairman of them all as well. That shows how secret they were, because I had no idea. Now all that has changed in my new Majorist Britain. As Mr Mellor put it so wittily: "Let's face it, John, you are your own mandate."



Everyone in the room had a good laugh, which shows how much they respect my new relaxed style of leadership. Mrs Thatcher would never have revealed that she was in charge of everything. Oh no.

Tuesday

I had another long letter this morning from my friend Jeffrey, saying that he had thought of another brilliant twist to his new novel, to make it "more of a cliffhanger". In this version it turns out that the only people who are stopping the hero, the great novelist Godfrey Bowman, from being made a lord are three snobbish old lords who don't want Jeffrey to be made a lord as well. But luckily his friend the prime minister, James Colonel, sacks the lords and makes Godfrey the Duke of Archer. I tell Jeffrey that this new twist really makes his book exciting. It is almost like real life!

Wednesday

Today I had to go to a place called Czechoslovakia. Mr Hurd tells me that we have to offer them our help. I was met by the President who is called Mr Havel. He was a very nice man with a moustache. I discovered that he had invented the idea of having a Citizens Charter, although his was called Charter 77. But in my judgement it sounds as though his Charter is very vague, and does not get down to the nitty-gritty. When I asked him whether it had any provisions for compensation in the case of late running rural buses, or the coffee being cold in hospital waiting rooms, he closed his eyes and looked very thoughtful.

I now realise that the best help I can offer them is to lend them Mr Waldegrave, perhaps for a considerably indefinite period of time.

Thursday

Today at the Cabinet meeting everyone was talking about Canary Wharf which is a building which has apparently collapsed in the East End.

"Oh dear," I said, "I hope our friends from the *Daily Telegraph* are safe."

Mr Heseltine, who was wearing a hard hat with the words "I ♥ O and Y" written on it, said "You idiot, I mean prime minister — the firm's gone bust. Billions have been lost. Everyone's bankrupt. It was the supreme symbol of Thatcherism. Now it is empty, useless and unwanted."

"Like her," said Mr Mellor in another loyal and witty aside, proving that he is the perfect choice as Minister for Fun.

Everyone laughed, except Mr Lamont, who was busy doing a drawing of the tower on his blotter, which he showed to Mrs Bottomley, saying mysteriously "What goes up must come down, eh?"

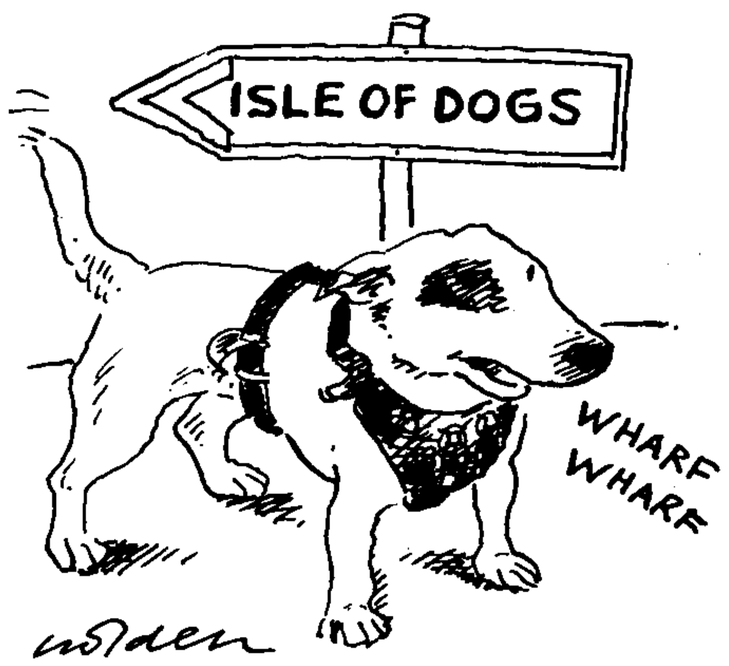
Friday

Another Cabinet meeting again on the subject of Canary Wharf. We are taking a firm line. There will definitely be no government help of any kind. All we are prepared to do is move the entire civil service into the empty offices and contribute money towards the extension of the Jubilee line. This is a tough decision but it shows that I am not the sort of Prime Minister who can be bullied by banks and property speculators. Oh no.

Saturday

I will not be bullied by civil servants either. Today I received a letter in my not inconsiderable mailbag from someone who is the head of them all. Whilst applauding my decision to move everyone to Canary Wharf, this man points out a number of drawbacks to the scheme. Some of these seem to be quite trivial, e.g. there are no good restaurants in the area, it is not near Charing Cross, and they would all have to leave their offices very early to get to the opera on time.

I told this man to write to Mr Waldegrave, who might consider setting up a Civil Servants' Charter.



Later Norma told me to get ready, we were going to see Ol' Blue Eyes. "No, we are not," I said. "I told you I'm never going to talk to that woman again." Instead we ended up at a concert given by an old man in a wig who sang a song called "My Way". This seemed highly appropriate after my resolute dealing over Canary Wharf.

THOUSANDS INVADE PEACEFUL VILLAGE SHOCK

by Our Music Staff **Lyn Barber of Seville**

VILLAGERS of a sleepy Sussex hamlet are up in arms at the annual invasion of a patch of local ground by thousands of so-called "music-lovers".

For the past weeks the convoys of people have been arriving at Glyndebourne from all over Britain, blocking the narrow lanes and causing havoc to local residents.

Said one outraged villager: "They are not music-lovers at all. Most of them come here to get drunk and fall asleep. They sit around on the grass with their hampers, guzzling their booze with the music blaring out."

Magic Champagne Flute

Said the local vicar: "We are kept awake every night by the sound of car doors slamming, champagne corks popping and upper-class people singing arias very badly. The police just stand by, saying: "Good evening, Sir, can I park your car for you?"

Call Nick Rossini

However, landowner George Christie, who every year lets the travellers in, said: "They are perfectly harmless — at least until the interval. Some of them do get a bit aggressive during *The Electrification of the Soviet Union* and ask for their money back, but on the whole they pose no threat."

Who are they, the so-called ravers?

Sir Edward Heath is typical of the older generation. "Hello. There is a great atmosphere here. Of course it's no place for philistines like Mrs Thatcher. Some of the conductors are quite good, though not as good as myself."

Nathaniel "Nat" Westminster, 43, a merchant banker: "The majority of us here do very little in the winter. We just live for the summer when we can put on our fancy gear and catch the 12.43 from Victoria. I cannot understand the fuss, or indeed the operas."

Lucinda Prior-Engagement, 19: "This is my first time and I love it. The trees, the sheep, the flowers. It's nature in tune with like everything. And all my schoolfriends are here as well. It's brilliant."

David Mellor, 42, Chelsea fan and Minister for Heritage: "I'll be honest. I come here for the birds, the booze and the Bizet. You can't beat it. And what's more it's totally free. For me, anyway."

"Eureka! I've found a way to halt the ageing process"

GOOCH SLAMS GOWER

by Our Cricket Staff
Lunchtime O'Val

THE world of cricket was rocked to its foundations today when England captain Graham Gooch accused top batsman David Gower of "being lazy".

David Gower, 32, the languid public school player at the centre of the controversy, refused to be drawn into the row.

"I just can't be bothered. It's too much effort."

Graham is 3 (bowled Akram).

POETRY CORNER

In Memoriam Peter Jenkins, Political Columnist

So. Farewell

Then
Peter Jenkins.
Political columnist
And pundit.

"The economic
indicators
Would appear to
suggest that
A shift towards a post-
Thatcherite consensus is
Imminent."

Yes. That was
Your catchphrase.

E.J. Thribb (17½)

Gardeners' Question Time

Q: When is the best time to water my garden?

A: Well, at the moment I would recommend late at night — after all the neighbours have gone to bed. Sneak out there and give it a damn good hosing. Go on, flood the place. You never know when they'll try and cut you off.

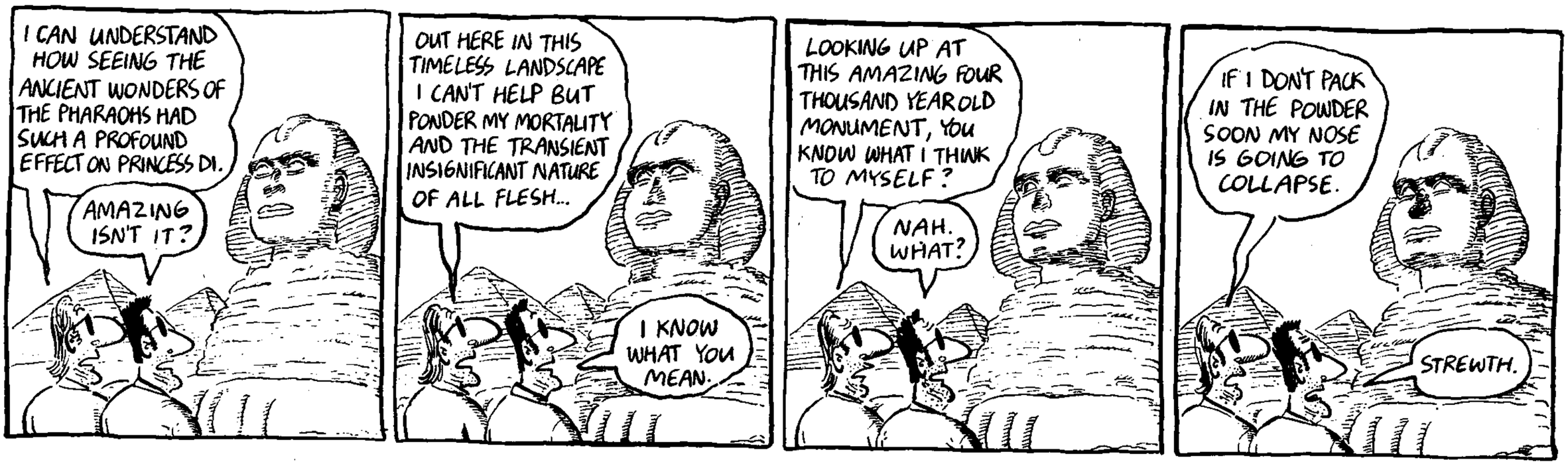
Q: Thank you.

Great Bores Of Today.

"... we're going to Iceland this year people may laugh about the risks but there's no doubt that even a couple of hours in the sun puts you in danger and just imagine what two weeks in Greece is going to do to you let alone the kids even if you put sunblock on them it doesn't matter if you use the highest factor there is when we were younger there was the ozone layer to protect us but now forget it I saw this aerial photograph of the earth and there's no sign of it I was in the garden the other day cutting the hedge and after an hour I started feeling really sick and I got a terrible headache my arms went all red I had to go and lie down when I saw the doctor the next day he said you're crazy to go out in it no that's why we're going to see the fjords it's 3^{o} below zero and there are these amazing mosses you can see..."

Celeb

LIGGER


I CAN UNDERSTAND HOW SEEING THE ANCIENT WONDERS OF THE PHARAOHS HAD SUCH A PROFOUND EFFECT ON PRINCESS DI.
AMAZING ISN'T IT?
OUT HERE IN THIS TIMELESS LANDSCAPE I CAN'T HELP BUT PONDER MY MORTALITY AND THE TRANSIENT INSIGNIFICANT NATURE OF ALL FLESH...
I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN.
LOOKING UP AT THIS AMAZING FOUR THOUSAND YEAR OLD MONUMENT, YOU KNOW WHAT I THINK TO MYSELF?
NAH. WHAT?
IF I DON'T PACK IN THE POWDER SOON MY NOSE IS GOING TO COLLAPSE.
STREWTH.

HEIR OF SORROWS

BY

SYLVIE KRIN

THE STORY SO FAR: Charles's concern about the environment is growing day by day.

Now read on...

THE summer sun blazed down on the famous Ronson Gardens at Buckingham Palace. Charles, dressed in his elegant Heathcote Amory short-sleeved safari suit, strolled across the beautifully manicured lawn with his companion Dr Barkworth.

The emerald sward stretched before them, its lush surface glittering with droplets nourished by the giant Reichmann Hydrosprinkler (a gift from President Shamir of Israel).

The two men paused beneath the magnificent *Aqua guzzla brazilia* planted in the previous century by the Prince Consort himself.

"It's an Amazonian Sponge Tree," Charles explained to the attentive Dr Barkworth. "It's the only one of its kind in Britain."

They sat on a bench in the shade of the tree's broad leaves and the June sunlight danced and flickered on the sheet of water from the high-pressure nozzles which formed a rainbow prism that seemed to cascade with jewelled (*Get on with it — Ed*).

The old rustic-style seat, made from from tropical hardwoods by Viscount Linley in his King's Road workshop, creaked ominously as the two environmentalists rested their limbs on its rough hewn planks.

"About tonight's speech, Sire," began the Doctor, extracting a sheaf of notes from his battered briefcase.

"Ah yes, the drought," Charles volunteered. "I thought I might take the line that it's appalling."

"How brilliant, Sire. If I may say so that is the most extraordinarily original view and as it happens I have a few statistics here that might back up your thesis." As Barkworth handed over his notes, a procession of gnarled gardeners filed past on their way to the shrubbery, each carrying a vast watering can brimful of rainwater.

Charles scanned the notes avidly. Amazingly they seemed to confirm his worst fears.

"You see? These rivers are all drying up. The Ridley, the Twee, the Sloane where I used to fish with Granny, all reduced to a sort of desert. Look at this picture. It looks like the Kalahari, where my old friend and mentor Sir Laurens once took me. What is it he says in his book? 'When the rivers run dry, there isn't any water.' "

"How true that is, Sire," chimed in the bearded conservationist.

Just then a gust of wind shifted the axis of the sprinkler causing a fine spray to descend on the Royal Prince and his learned adviser. Slightly dampened the two men resumed their perambulation around the gravelled paths where arching Desmonda Wilcoxias twined with the fragrant blossoms of the lush overblown Rosa Evepollarda in a floral cornucopia of luscious *(I said get on with it. Ed)*.

"We have to restrict consumption if our natural resources are to be preserved," Charles explained to his nodding associate. Indeed so deep in his thoughts was the Prince that he almost failed to acknowledge the greeting of Head Gardener Hastings, who loyally tipped his forelock with a weather-beaten finger.

"Good afternoon, Your Highness, Mr Doctor. I've just attached the hose to the strawberry bed in the organic greenhouse. The fruit'll be good and ripe come Martinmas, provided you give 'em plenty to drink."

So saying, he took his leave and made his way to the giant garden stopcock.

"If I may make so bold, Sire," Dr Barkworth continued, "the introduction of water meters is a positive step. And we must consider further more stringent measures unless there is a dramatic change in the weather, and even then..."

They rounded a corner and came face to face with the gardens' *pièce de resistance*, a magnificent Renaissance fountain built originally for the Palazzo di Canaria Warfo in Florence and transported stone by stone to England by Charles' ancestor King William the Shoplifter. Marble nymphs, goddesses and huge ornate fish disported in a riot of foam and spray, topped by a gigantic nude statue of the goddess Diana with a stream of water issuing from her elegantly-carved open mouth.

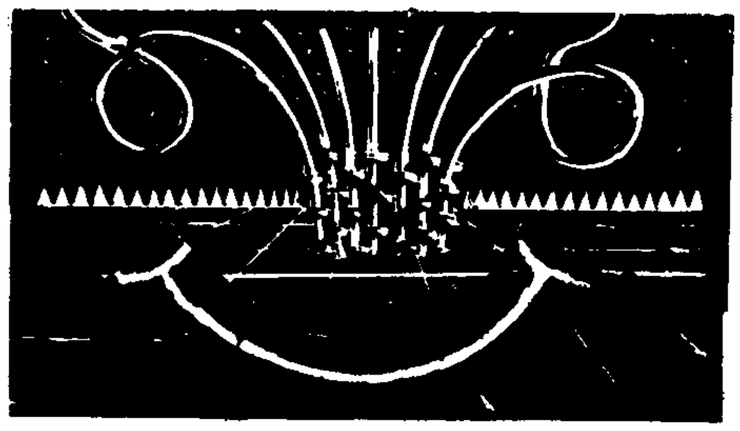
Dr Barkworth paused. It was the first time he had seen the famous Fontana di Geraldo Scarfini and a worried look came over his face.

"You don't think, Sire, there's going to be any problems with regard to this water thing? I'm thinking about the fountain, the gardens, etc."

"Oh no. No problem." Charles dismissed his consultant's concerns with a wave of his hand. "We've got plenty here. They bring it in lorries. Now come this way. You must see the lake."

(To be continued)

DIARY



MARTIN SCORSESE

Am I religious? Religious? Am I? Am I religious? Huh? I am religious. You remember the scene in *Taxi Driver* when De Niro pumps Keitel in the head with the shotgun? You remember? And a trickle of blood comes out his nose?

That trickle of blood is a rosary.

The whole scene — the massacre of the pimps and the gun-runners by De Niro, who's a kind of avenging angel — has always reminded me of Piero della Francesca's *Madonna della Misericordia*, it has the same kind of deep spiritual quality. I get a lot of inspiration from Renaissance painters, you know. It looks like my next movie might be *The Sistine Chapel Ceiling* reset in the Bronx with guns and one hell of a lot of anger: Adam's always pointing the finger at God and God says who is this guy anyway and why can't he quit buggin' me huh? and God can't take it no more and he's out for *revenge*. It's my own, very personal reaction to the Bible story, and I see no reason why it should cause offence.

All my films are about religion and morality, how a good man should behave in the modern world. Take this scene from my movie *Bastard Bunny Kill* (1973), my re-working of the Beatrix Potter stories set in urban New York with De Niro as Peter Rabbit:

(Cut to)

Peter Rabbit: Huh?

(Close up)

Farmer MacGregor *(The Black Pimp)*: Jeez...

(Rabbit's hand moves to shoulder holster)

MacGregor: Shit man...

(Rabbit pumps MacGregor twelve times through head)

MacGregor: Jeez...

Rabbit: Huh?

MacGregor: Shit man...

Rabbit: Huh?

MacGregor: Ugh.

(Mrs Tiggywinkle enters room naked. She bristles)

Rabbit: Huh?

Tiggywinkle: Jeez.

(Rabbit throttles Tiggywinkle with bare hands, finishes her off with pump-action shotgun)

Tiggywinkle: Shit man...

Rabbit: Huh?

(Close up, Peter Rabbit in confessional)

Everytime I see that scene, I'm totally moved by it. It's like the Crucifixion. The hedgehog is the crown of thorns, only they're now saying the historical Jesus didn't wear a hedgehog, just a crown of thorns, I don't know, maybe a hedgehog would have over-run his budget.

In *Bastard Bunny Kill*, De Niro was dead set on playing the rabbit just right so he spent four months pacing himself for the role by eating carrots, hanging around kitchen gardens and growing his ears. Jeez, the guy's a perfectionist.

He becomes every role he plays — the angry loner in *Cape Fear*, or the loner who's kinda angry in *Taxi Driver*, or the lonely, angry guy in *Mean Streets* or the really angry loner in *King of Comedy* or the angry guy who's kinda lonely in *Cape Fear*. And he can bring so much to a role. Originally, I wanted him to play Christ in my movie *The Last Temptation of Christ*.

"Howdya see it, Bob, huh? The role of Christ, Bob, howdya see it, huh?" I asked him.

I watched him as he thought long and hard. Then he looked me straight in the face and he said, "Marty," he said, "Marty, the guy's a loner. And he's angry, huh?"

"Jeez, Bob," I said, "That's uncanny! That's just the way I see him too, huh! Let's make it together, Bob!" But in the end Bob was booked for another project, playing the part of the angry loner in the remake of *Dr Doolittle*, so I got some other guy for Jesus, and that guy brought his own interpretation to the role, playing him as more of an angry loner.

From my earliest days, I've always been in love with cinema. It has occupied all my care and attention from as far back as I can remember. My quest for beauty in the cinema is never-ending. Like, when I was filming *Raging Bull*, about this lonely guy, full of anger — a role played, after many months of sitting in a gym being punched, by one of my favourite actors, Bob De Niro — I wanted to capture the real beauty of Jake La Motta having his nose punched outta shape.

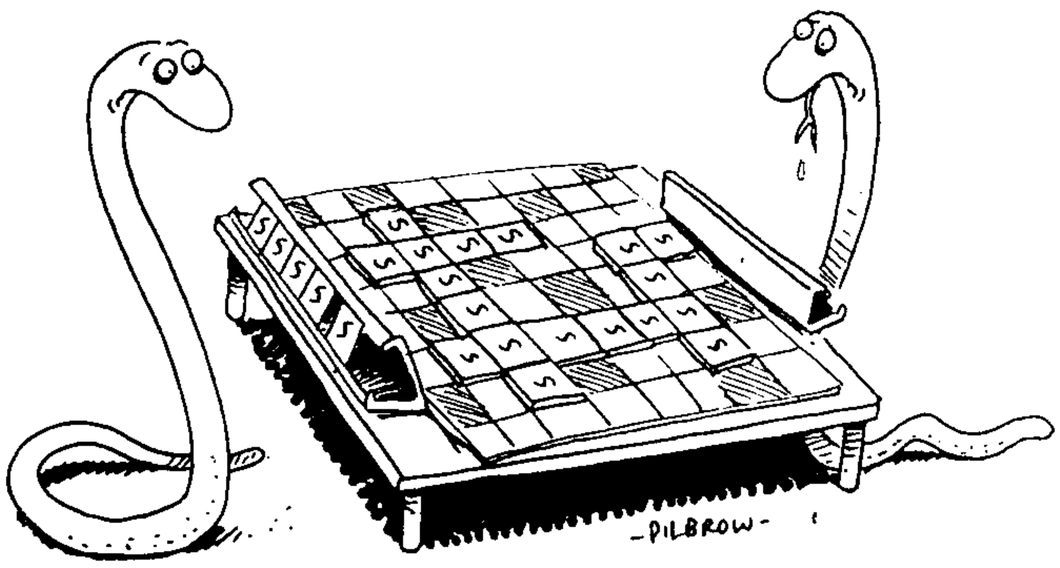
Again and again, I referred back to Italian masterpieces such as Caravaggio's *Death of the Virgin* and Giorgione's *Tempest*. Again and again, I would re-run scenes from great old movies such as *The Bicycle Thieves* and *Citizen Kane* to see if they contained angry loners being punched senseless. Then, for forty days and forty nights, our ninety-strong crew stayed in that boxing ring. We miked up Bob's gloves and his nose and for this sequence I even strapped the camera to his chest, so you go with the hit. In the movie, the scene lasts just five second: you see the glove coming — cut to the nose — then to the glove — then fist hits nose — cut to blood spurting out, like in a Canaletto fountain.

Then Bob has the line "Uh". Simple but beautiful, but Bob had to get to know every damn part of his character before he could get to grips with that line. He said to me, he said, "Marty, what does a guy actually *feel* when he has his nose punched? What do you think he's *going through*?"

"Bob," I said after a lot of thought, "Bob — I'd guess he feels kinda — how'd you put it? — beat up." So we settled that Bob would say "Uh" with a kinda hurt, kinda beat-up expression — angry, yeah, lonely, yeah — but also kinda, well, beat-up.

So we filmed for a month, never quite getting the beat-up expression I was after. That "Uh" just didn't sound beat-up enough. So eventually I pulled Bob to one side, set the cameras going and punched him with great force in the nose. "UH!" he said, "UH!" – giving us a choice of two perfect UHs for the final cut. "Jeez, Bob," I said, "You're so instinctive."

It causes me a hell of a lot of pain when my movies are misunderstood by the world at large. For instance, they say they're violent. Huh! It's my opinion that they are fiercely moral tales, born of my deep sense of inner conflict with Catholicism, parables against violence and revenge in our sick society. Like, in that scene in *Stabbing Strangers* (1975) where Rick, the angry loner, oppressed by Catholic guilt and a sense of deep moral duty, hacks the head off his girlfriend Karen before stabbing to death his best friend Steve — I wanted to show that no good comes of violence, so that when Rick tries to do the same thing again the next day, he finds it's no good, Steve is already dead and Karen has already had her head hacked off and so he realised that you can't kill the same man twice, you have to pick on someone new. As I read it, this is the stark message of Jesus Christ in the New Testament. So why do people say I got violence on the brain, huh? They need their heads examined. Or better still shot to pieces with an automatic pump-action shotgun, huh?



7 in 7

COUNCIL food inspectors found the tarramasalata a bit of a turn off during a hygiene swoop on local deli's, restaurants and supermarkets.

And they were horrified at what was hidden away in the hummous, another of the Greek-style dips on sale at food shops throughout the borough.

For both, reveals a report to the council's environmental health and consumer committee, had high bacterial counts.

A sample of cooked prawns from a seafood stall contained orgasms which were traced back to to supplier.

Sutton Extra

Literary Review

Parvenue for the coarse...

Modern Manners: The Essential Guide to Living in the '90s
Drusilla Beyfus
(Hamlyn, £16.99)

IT'S A TOUGH one, innit? I mean, you see somebody coming up to you. What you gonna say? Gotta get it right, haven't you? It can be a right bastard, can't it?

Well, now, for just seventeen quid too, your problems are over. This sabre-toothed tart called Drusilla has gone public with the hard stuff. She knows and she tells. Brilliant.

" 'Hello' is one of many informal greetings. Mentioning the time of day 'Good morning' or 'Good evening' has its advocates, especially in casual encounters. Parting expressions include 'Goodbye' or more chattily 'Bye' as well as a whole range of colloquialisms such as 'See you' or 'Take care'."

Oh *hello*. Bye! Wonderful. It's a whole new world out there for me from now on. And Drusy doesn't stop with that either. No, she really knows her stuff: "In courtship and love affairs, paying attentions is of the essence." Too right! You have to pretend to listen to the little darlings too, don't I know it. "Getting to know the other person remains one of the principal aims of courtship" — yeah, if not the only one, know what I mean?

Apparently, another thing you have to do is conversation. "Conversation offers boundless opportunities to make a good impression." Well, maybe; but it sounds dodgy to me. "The ability to communicate ideas whether in speech or writing is an enviable grace which enhances life all round." Separates us from the animals, too, I shouldn't wonder, but I think I'll leave it out, personally.

But old Drusilla really levels with you, you got to give her that. Like on funerals. "Convention does not allow you to address the dead except in memorials." It's a complete waste of time asking them if they'd like a drink too, take it from me. And on parties. "It is distinctly unwise to assume that the characteristics of our so called 'plural society' in which colour, creed and class rub shoulders can necessarily be contained within the small world of private entertaining." Too right! No way will I share my crisps with a nig-nog.

And on sex and that. "Physical intimacy can perplex and even alarm very private people, even in today's climate of rude awareness." Well, that's right innit, you got to ask first, it's the law. "Nor should a lover feel offended if asked to use a contraceptive or give an account of their sexual health. Women carry condoms out of commonsense. It is the moment at which she produces the contraceptive that calls for sensitivity on her part" — like, in the upper classes she only gets one out after you've done the whole "hello" bit, I imagine. That's manners, if you like.

Food too, she tells you the lot. "Holding a knife and fork," for example. It's not that I haven't tried it. I have. But I couldn't get the hang of it. But I'm definitely gonna give it another go now, now she's told me how. And I know what to try it on too — potatoes. "Potatoes baked in their jackets come halved or whole on the plate, or in a big dish from which you life one or two. You may eat every morsel of both skin and flesh, or scoop out the white potato inside, leaving the jacket. It is a matter of personal taste. Use a knife and fork or fork alone." Well, ta, I'll just see how it goes, eh?

And she's well up to date too. Like, it's not all ballroom dancing nowadays, far from it. "Jiving and disco dancing breaks many accepted barriers — men and women dance solo or may cavort with their own sex to the rhythm of the beat." I'll say. And she even tells you how posh people turn down drugs politely. "It could be that they had a bad trip last time, or that they don't smoke, or that if substances are being sold they cannot afford them." That's really nice, that is. Myself, it's usually just "Cheers, but I'm still rat arsed from last night."

So I reckon this old boiler's book is really good. 'Course one of me mates has been snotty about it. "Etiquette books," this git said, "only come into existence where people are trying to ape the manners of their betters. They play cruelly on class-insecurity, pretending that manners are universal, when they are necessarily the product of exclusive social groups. This one is merely a Victorian guide for *parvenus* lightly modernised, compounded equally of insulting banalities and patronising absurdities. The mere fact of its publication is a signal instance of the new snobbery, filtering down to the duped lower middle-classes."

Well, bollocks to that, say I. I never saw the use of books before, but this one's for me, definite. BYE!

Books & Bookmen

☐ **WHAT *IS* the problem with 26-year-old James Wood, the *Grauniad*'s abrasive and pompous chief reviewer?**

That he loathes and despises the contemporary English novel is apparent from his ranting polemics posing as reviews. Poor Fay Weldon is bemused to have received a letter from Wood explaining to her that: "I write better than most contemporary critics because I *care* about literature. *It matters to me.*" He goes on to admit, blushingly, that he is engaged in writing a novel of his own. Perhaps that is the problem.

■ ONE of the dottier aspects of the book trade is the obsession with so-called bestseller lists at a time when hardly anyone is buying a book yet vast and lavish new bookshops continue to be opened.

Some of the lists, such as the *Evening Standard*'s, are more or less the private fiefdom of the literary editor. Booksellers prefer the lists to indicate the titles that aren't selling in the hope that the herd instinct will operate and customers will rush in to buy what they foolishly believe everyone else is buying.

Some years ago Peter Harland, who used to work for the *Sunset Times*, set up what was to be an authoritative, definitive bestseller list, calling his organisation "Bookwatch Ltd". He easily persuaded his old paper to back him by carrying the lists, and sold them to Whitaker's, publishers of *The Bookseller*. The lists which appear each Friday in the organ of the book trade and two days later in the *Sunset Times* are never the same. Shome mishtake shurely, you might think.

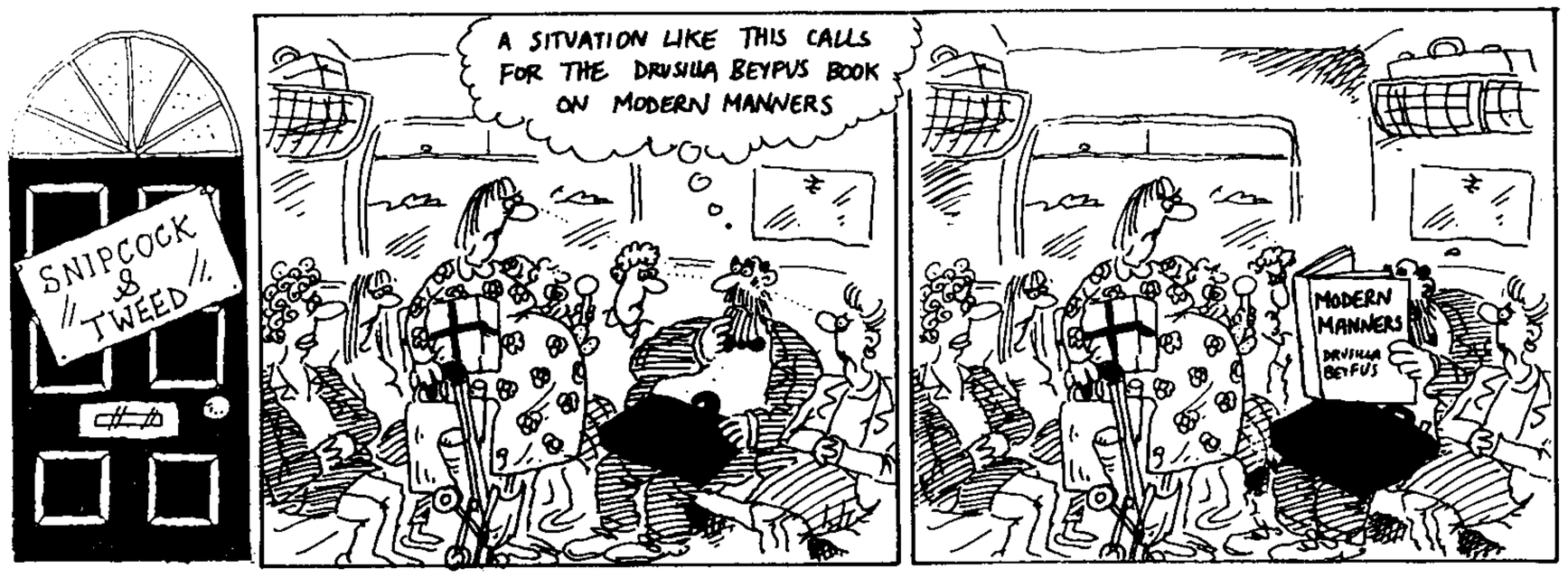
Major publishers subscribe to Bookwatch, too, and each week receive print-outs of the 100 top selling hardbacks and paperbacks, fiction and non-fiction. Publishers who do not subscribe do not find their books are bestsellers; nor do real bestsellers, such as the Bible, dictionaries or the *Highway Code* appear, for they are unglamorous and thus conspicuous by their exclusion. It was on one of the lists sent to subscribing publishers that the great Harold Brodkey's *The Runaway Soul* featured before the manuscript had even been delivered to its publisher.

The top-selling non-fiction title in the UK two weeks ago was Great Bore Bryan Appleyard's *Understanding the Present*, yet it failed to feature anywhere on Bookwatch's lists. The same week the supposed biggest seller, Stephen Hawking's *A Brief History of Time*, sold under 200 copies. Everyone connected with these lists is anxious to prop up the Hawking, published over three years ago, so that in a few weeks' time it may overtake Edith Holden's *Diary of an Edwardian Country Lady* as Britain's longest-running bestseller. Bookwatch simply "forgot" to include Applecheek's book.

☐ *THE Institute of Contemporary Arts is experiencing financial problems, despite having persuaded Madonna to become a patron.*

The ICA Bookshop is in the red to such an extent that its suppliers have put a stop on its account. When the Canadian novelist Margaret Atwood gave a recent talk there, the ICA bookshop was unable to obtain copies of her books to sell to the audience. It had to go to the nearest Waterstone's to buy a pile at the full retail price to avoid embarrassment.

'Bookworm'


SNIPCOCK & TWEED
A SITUATION LIKE THIS CALLS FOR THE DRUSILLA BEYPUS BOOK ON MODERN MANNERS
MODERN MANNERS
DRUSILLA BEYFUS

WATER

Dry ayes in the House

MICHAEL Howard, the environment secretary, will follow his predecessors' example by doing absolutely nothing to combat this summer's drought.

This has been the official tactic since the drought of 1976, and while Howard is allegedly looking at "long-term measures", this is in fact a synonym for stagnating. A national water grid is always a popular subject for official discussions, but it will never happen because it would cost billions and take years to build. The idea is therefore forgotten at the end of each summer.

There are, however, three realistic measures that *would* make a significant difference now, but none is likely to be taken up.

The first was suggested in the last *Eye* (before the rest of the press had heard about this year's water shortage), when we said that water companies could embark on an extensive (and expensive) programme of "mains lining" — inserting inner tubes into desperately leaking pipes.

This idea is so sensible that even the *Daily Mail* has picked it up, telling readers of its editorial on Monday 1 June: "Stopping leaks should have the highest priority." As the *Eye* had already explained, it would mean recruiting and training thousands of new staff; but even this did not put off the *Financial Times*, which also gave its support with the warning that "should rainfall return to historic levels, a large project might end in embarrassment".

That is of course the shareholders' view. So far as the environment is concerned, it would be a permanent asset in reducing waste and pumping. But the water companies prefer to keep their investors and overpaid chief executives happy and go on losing vast quantities of water that seaps into the ground.

The second meansure is to transport water by tanker from areas such as Northumbria, which is rich in supplies, to the parched south-east. For many years water was sent this way to Gibraltar when the Spanish frontier was closed, and it was contemplated for our boys during the Gulf war. The only objection is that it costs money.

The third measure, which no one has dared mention, is to ban or at least restrict the use of dishwashers and washing machines. Their increasing numbers are responsible for much of the growing demand for water. A dishwasher uses 55 litres, and a washing machine 110 litres (compared with 80 litres for a bath and 35 for a shower). Bans on hosepipes are usually obeyed; but to extend the idea into the home will arouse an interesting response. Perhaps one of our more patriotic newspapers will put the idea forward.

However, Britain's problems this summer are but dust compared to France's. She needs water for her nuclear power stations (four are on the Loire, stretches of which are already reduced to dried mud) and for its hydroelectric plant. France could well run out of water and electricity at the same time.

ELECTRICITY

Pylon the pressure

THE PUBLIC inquiry that opened last week at Northallerton, North Yorkshire, into the demand by the national grid for permission to station 170 gleaming pylons across 50 miles of unspoilt countryside is one consequence of privatisation that nobody foresaw.

The aim, says the grid, is to comply with the law; but the scenario will be repeated in many other areas as the new gas-fired power stations are built by private generators. The grid now has a wonderful opportunity to extend its network and blame someone else.

Under privatisation, the National Grid Company is required to hook up *any* new power station. The Government, trying to introduce competition into the system, was happy to see the American combine Enron, in association with four British regional electricity companies, apply to build the world's largest gas-fired power station on a site owned by ICI at Teesside. It will be one of the new "clean" stations — that is, it will emit four million tonnes of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere every year.

There was no public inquiry and nobody bothered to ask how the electricity was to be transmitted from the 1,275 megawatt colossus. Then along came the national grid to say that as it would be required by law to deliver the power, it would need all the new pylons, each one 150 feet high, and together costing £200 million.

As William Sheate, of the Council for the Protection of Rural England, puts it: "For all its faults, the old CEGB was both the generator and the distributor and it addressed both issues at the same time in its applications. Now with the so-called dash for gas, the generator makes an application and then the grid has an obligation to connect any new generator. The secretary of state [then John Wakeham] failed to consider all the issues he should have done in giving permission and the outcry has arisen after the event."

In fact only *Private Eye* pointed out the objections to such a huge new energy source, which depends on burning fossil fuel. The local councils, mostly in the hands of the somnolent north-east Labour Party, did nowt.

There are now seven local authorities and no fewer than 8,500 individuals objecting to the proposed Yorkshire pylons. The Government is hoping to polish them off in 10 weeks, and the inquiry is being held in a local community centre which has no air conditioning and is liable to get rather warm, particularly after lunch.

It is the first big electricity inquiry since Sizewell, where the inspector said Yes; and Hinkley Point where the inspector also said Yes. It is not unreasonable to think that the two inspectors (from the DTI and environment) presiding jointly at Northallerton will decide to let pylons be pylons.

What makes the whole affair particularly absurd is that no one needs the station. Who says so? No less an authority than the grid itself. In its survey of generating capacity over the next seven years, it says that there will be 30,000 megawatts of *over*-capacity by 1997 and we shall have what is known as "plant margin" three times higher than the rest of the world.

The inquiry will hear many demands for the cables to be buried. This is a long-standing controversy with the grid which always claims that "undergrounding", as it calls it, is too expensive. It puts up the price by 10 to 15 times, the grid says, in a thumb-sucking guess.

The grid has 4,000 miles of overhead lines and less than 400 miles underground. The objectors want to know what is so special about the one-tenth of the country (usually in towns) which enjoys the privilege of the more expensive underground cabling. Critics claim that the grid's figures are massaged by ignoring the cost (to industry, commerce and domestic consumers) of the power cuts when wind and snow bring down the overhead lines, and of concentrating instead on the costs to itself of repairing the damage. Yorkshire is noted for particularly severe winters.

The grid replies that power cuts do not happen all that often. In the winter of 1987 a hurricane succeeded in blacking out half the country and the CEGB described this as "a triumph" ("a disaster", it explained, would have been blacking out the whole country.)

The grid made a profit last year of £111 million and paid out £104 million to the RECs in dividends. The chairman, David Jefferies, earned £134,000.

POLICE 5

Knackered Knacker

THE MYSTERY of the M50 murder of Marie Wilks, which has been in the news recently, was "solved" by a famous team: Det Chief Supt David Cole of the West Mercia police and home office pathologist Dr Peter Acland, the pair who dealt with the mysterious murder in 1984 of Shrewsbury rose-grower Hilda Murrell.

Mr Cole kept telling the press that the murderer was a "common burglar" who would be brought to justice, but he found it difficult to explain why this common burglar took Miss Murrell out of her home, drove her through the streets of Shrewsbury in her own car and dumped her, stabbed many times but not yet dead, in the middle of the countryside.

Both Mr Cole and Dr Acland were very unimpressed by suggestions that Miss Murrell may have been killed by an "investigative agent" hired by the big nuclear power companies (or MI5) to "monitor" her sustained opposition to the building of nuclear power stations.

The common burglar who killed Hilda Murrell was never found, but that has not stopped Mr Cole and Mr Acland from writing a book in which, they suggest, they may even disclose the identity of the murderer they didn't catch.

The M50 case was one of Cole's last. His desperately pathetic case against South Wales bouncer Eddie Browning was greatly assisted by the pathologist, who had a fascinating explanation as to why no identifiable blood was found in Browning's car when it was seized a week after the murder. Dr Acland agreed at once that the victim had been cut with a knife, probably in the neck as she phoned the police from a motorway telephone, and was then bundled bleeding into the murderer's car. But he thought it quite possible that she had managed to staunch the bleeding while she was being driven to her death a few miles further on.

This view was too much for the other home office pathologist on the case, Dr Ian West, who described it as "most unlikely".

THE home office "investigation" into claims that two East London Tamils serving life sentences for a fatal firebombing may have been wrongly convicted continues to demonstrate the inadequacy of the machinery for investigating miscarriages of justice.

As reported in *Eye* 793, Essex police have been brought in to look at new evidence, as they were in the Tottenham Three case. Now, in an unprecedented move, Essex has asked the "independent" Police Complaints Authority (PCA) to supervise *its* inquiry.

The whole affair is rendered more complex by the fact, pointed out by the *Independent*, that Francis Petre, the chairman of the PCA, was the judge at the Tamils' original trial. Contrary to the *Indie*'s hints that there might be a conflict of interest, however, Petre was apparently disturbed by elements of the case and is considered unlikely to oppose its re-opening. Much more worrying is the identity of the PCA member in charge: Jeff Crawford. The ill-fated Mr Crawford headed the inquiry into the West Midlands police serious crimes squad.

"Just you come here and say that"

ARMS & THE WOMAN

Per astra ad ardua

INSPIRED (perhaps) by the last few issues of the *Eye*, more than a few top hacks, including some on influential television current affairs programmes, are finally beginning to probe the scandal of the half century — the sale of arms to Middle East tyrants, especially Saddam Hussein.

What makes it the scandal of the half century is the association with these arms deals of the close relations of the woman who negotiated them — Mrs *M. Thatcher*, former prime minister.

Many journalists who have dealt with these matters in the past seem to have fallen by the wayside. David Hellier, the young journalist who led the field at the *Independent*, has resigned from that paper after being taken off the Thatcher/arms sales story. He goes to the *Sunday Times* where he will have even less chance of pursuing the matter.

The *Financial Times*'s award-winning investigation team which assured its informants last summer that it was "determined to get to the bottom of this business" has (after one long article) fled to safer pastures. In coming weeks the *Eye* will seek to assist the new investigators with the basic facts.

Perhaps the most vital thread in the story links the British Aerospace company to the Thatcher faction in the Tory government of 1985-90. Much has been written about the "sweeteners" paid by the Government, guided by its unctuous trade secretary Lord Young, to British Aerospace in recognition of its patriotic action in taking control of the Rover car company for next to nothing. These "sweeteners" were as nothing, however, when compared to the fantastic generosity of the Government when Royal Ordnance, a successful publicly-owned arms company, was privatised in 1987.

Hundreds of millions of pounds of public money were pumped into the company to make it a "viable proposition" for predators. A huge cash payment was dished out to "compensate" for design delays on the Alarm missile. And more than £40 million went on paying the costs of pollution at the Royal Ordnance site at Waltham Abbey.

Who was the lucky predator? Only GKN and British Aerospace were runners. It was hard for any other company to show any interest since the prospectus for the sale — stuffed full of fantastic goodies for the buyer — was kept very close to the main bidders' hands. It soon emerged that GKN's bid was just a token (GKN has traditionally been relied on to do what the Tory government tells it to); and BAe got the whole job lot (valued at about £500 million) for a cool £90 million, minus "sweeteners".

The determination of the Government to help its friends in British Aerospace is best illustrated by the price paid for Royal Ordnance's "intellectual property rights" (hugely valuable drawings, designs and data packages for missiles, worth at least £50 million). BAe gobbled up these for precisely £1 million.

But what was the justification for this crude robbery of the public purse? It was that the arms manufacturing field, allegedly dominated in the past by the cumbrous Royal Ordnance, should now become subject to the rigours of the market. Glorious free enterprise would triumph where once there was grim nationalisation.

Some civil servants actually believed this twaddle. One such was Peter (now Sir Peter) Levene, who had been brought in to supervise "defence procurement" (mainly arms sales) by his friend, the then defence minister Michael Heseltine. Heseltine had been forced out of office in the previous year's Westland scandal. He simply hadn't understood the importance to so many people of helicopters in the Al Yamamah arms deals negotiated and signed for Britain with the government of Saudi Arabia by Margaret Thatcher.

Westland-made helicopters made up a substantial part of the Al Yamamah package, which was in turn the biggest arms deal ever conducted. If Westland had "gone to Europe", how could the British Government ensure that the prying eyes of European accountants could be kept away from the fabulous commissions negotiated for British and Saudi middlemen on each Westland helicopter sold in the deal?

This explains Thatcher's own hysteria on the (at first sight) trivial issue of Westland, her leaking of the famous Mayhew letter, her support for her own nominee as Westland chairman, Sir John Cuckney, her bullying British Aerospace into line as soon as it complained that it was being railroaded, and above all her courageous insistence that her trade secretary Leon Brittan should take the rap for her own leaks and distortions. (Brittan's angry pursuit from his European commissioner's office of British Aerospace over the Rover sweeteners affairs may have its origin in the Westland scandal.)

Levene was sorry to see his friend and mentor Heseltine go, but he determined to stay at the ministry to promote free enterprise after the "sale" of Royal Ordnance. He approached the directors of a rapidly-growing young arms company called Astra. Would they like a piece of the Royal Ordnance action? he asked. Well, yes, Astra would like that very much indeed and, to prepare for the treat, Astra snapped up another efficient little arms company based on the Isle of Sheppey called BMARC. A prominent director of BMARC was the MP for the area, Mr Jonathan Aitken.

Almost at once, the Royal Ordnance goodies were snatched from underneath Astra's eyes. The Government signed a secret agreement called EPREP in which 80 per cent of the government orders for defence work would go to British Aerospace/Royal Ordnance. The hopes of Astra/BMARC for free competition were dashed. Astra looked round the world for other acquisitions, and in 1989 bought PRB, a Belgian arms company part-owned by one of the most powerful companies in the world, Societé Generale Belgique.

This huge takeover made Astra a powerful competitor in the arms business. The response of the authorities was to destroy it. One by one the directors were removed. The chairman was sacked by the institutional investors (led by 3i, chairman Sir John Cuckney); the chief executive was arrested on a trivial corruption charge and sent to prison. Only one director was left — the mysterious gun-toting former SAS man, Mr Stephan Koch (see last *Eye*).

Koch brought in "company doctor" Roy Barber and a new management team which succeeded in running the company into the ground. Somehow they failed to get a single order during the whole Gulf war. For the first time in history, department of trade inspectors were invited in by a company to investigate itself. Barber and Co sold off Astra's stake in PRB for a song. Now, finally, after calling in receivers, the rump of Astra has been sold too. Its buyers? The new monopoly: British Aerospace/Royal Ordnance, who paid £8 million. At least one other company had bid as much as £12 million.

The making of the British Aerospace monopoly had throughout the full support and encouragement of the queen of private enterprise, Margaret Thatcher. Against all comers and especially against all competitors she defended her beloved BAe and the precious deals (plus commissions) which she negotiated with the Saudis. These vast deals (plus commissions) came to be the very foundation of British foreign policy. At endless meetings with the heroine-worshipping chairman of British Aerospace, Roland Smith, Thatcher plotted the safeguarding of the old arms deals and discussed the chances of new ones.

Now that the Thatchers (and Roland Smith) are gone from office, now that Heseltine is back, many assume the entire ghastly episode is at an end. They reckon without the Saudi princes who have told the Major Government not to publish the comptroller and auditor general's report on the Al Yamamah deal, and insisted that the new minister for arms procurement should be their very own PR man and close friend and ally, Jonathan Aitken. Mr Major obliged.

RAIL PRIVATISATION

Fellow travellers...

WHEN the Government finally privatises British Rail, it will get no opposition from the transport users' consultative committees (TUCCs), which have a statutory duty to represent rail users.

Ministers and civil servants have made an excellent job of weeding out dissenters on the eight regional committees and their umbrella group, the Central Transport Consultative Committee (CTCC).

The result is that the CTCC now has "a policy of strict impartiality on the privatisation", to quote from Western England's TUCC's latest annual report. "It remains firmly committed to improvement of railway services, irrespective of origins of finance and ownership." These two sentences are contradictory since all the indicators (cf bus deregulation, *Eyes passim*) show that privatisation will wreck all rail routes except a profitable handful.

The page in the report devoted to the unhelpful passenger's charter — a page partly filled with a picture of "Paddington's magnificent refurbished roof" — is typical of the pompous, sickly praise and irrelevancies the committee uses to distract attention from the crisis facing BR and its passengers.

It says of one traveller who complained: "She gained sympathy and a Travel Voucher of small denomination. Unless she matches the vigour of her complaint with commensurate prudence in planning her journeys, she may not find the Railway Passengers Charter to her liking."

A page headed "Rolling Stock" carries a close-up photo of a baby, instead of asking why ancient, decrepit trains in the Reading area still haven't been replaced. "Lucky cyclists in the west. A DMU offers accommodation for four," gushes a picture caption, omitting to mention that bicycles will practically be banned from the same services when new trains are introduced later this year.

The fact is that the TUCCs are now simply quangos of Tory nobodies ("The personal interest which Roger Freeman MP [Tory] has shown in the revival of a station at Corsham is greatly appreciated. It matches that shown by Richard Needham MP [Tory]...") And the Western England TUCC report admits that committee members are appointed by the trade and industry secretary, *not* transport.

TUCC members who had the temerity to ask awkward questions are sure to have been removed by now. A prime example is that of Barry Doe, who knew all there was to know about the railways. Through his work as a travel agent and columnist for *Modern Railways* magazine, he gained an encyclopaedic knowledge of rail, and in an effort to overcome the no-integration curse laid on buses at the time of deregulation, he researched and published the definitive UK bus *and* rail guide off his own back.

There are few as competent to represent British Rail travellers as Barry Doe, which perhaps explains why he was removed from the Southern England TUCC in 1990 for no apparent reason.

LLOYD'S

Bye, George!

CHARLES St George, racehorse owner, society darling, friend of journalists, and, er, crook, is dead.

Eulogies to the smooth old rogue have appeared in all the newspapers, with endless mentions of his great contribution to racing, etc. His great contribution to underwriting seems to have been overlooked.

St George ran the discredited Oakley Vaughan agency, which has left many "names" broke and writs galore flying around Lloyd's. St George advised many of the Lloyd's names who invested in his syndicates that they did not need to take out stop loss insurance to protect themselves against losses or bad underwriting. Secretly, however, he insured his own family.

Lloyd's conducted its own secret internal inquiry into Oakley Vaughan and, to its eternal shame, failed to disclose the contents of the damning report to the names, thus incurring greater losses for St George's victims.

Though not generous to investors, he *was* generous to various hacks and his sudden death of a heart attack may have caused one or two problems for some of them. Those hacks who St George felt were getting too close to him would be offered a "complementary" mortgage. Those who took the bribe (and there were takers) must be a little concerned that the executors of his estate may now call the mortgages in.

In the City

WHEN unreconstructed corporate predators like James Hanson start talking about acting "in the national interest" it is time for the taxpayer to keep a close eye on the public purse.

Lord Hanson and his expensive partner Lord White have never been renowned for acting in other than the interests of their Hanson empire, its shareholders and making money, except of course where such minor matters as racehorses and Beverley Hills homes might be concerned.

Therefore the Hanson/White initiative over Canary Wharf, relayed to the world through the predatory peers' usual fawning megaphones, the *Sunday Times* and the *Sunday Telegraph*, may be both much less and much more than it seems.

Just why Hanson, with no experience in property, should want to get involved in a billion pound disaster which could take into the next century to rescue is not immediately apparent. The Hanson trademark is always to look for income as well as assets that can be bought below value. Canary Wharf has not enough of the first and the value of the second is highly debatable. Nor does Hanson normally look to tie up cash in assets that cannot be sold on easily, clearly the case with the Reichmann folly. As to funding public transport, *shurely shome mishtake*.

So what lies behind this untypical outburst of Hanson/White public spirited generosity? Bear in mind that the politician tasked with salvaging the Government's very red face over the fall of Mrs Thatcher's favourite property speculators is Lord Wakeham, the same John Wakeham with whom the peers dallied over PowerGen long enough to change the City climate in favour of the privatisation share sale.

Wakeham and the Government hold the key to two crucial factors which could save Canary Wharf — the future destination of at least 2,000 hapless civil servants from the department of the environment who need to be found a new home; and the £400 million contribution Olympia & York is contracted to pay towards the Jubilee line extension. If Hanson could have the first without the second, then the Canary Wharf numbers could start to look more attractive — to Hanson if not to the taxpayer.

But even if they are not up to Hanson standard, the mere expression of interest, as with PowerGen, could act as a very helpful stalking horse for not just the Government but also Lord Prim's friends Paul Reichmann and *Telegraph* owner Conrad Black, whom he meets via the advisory board of Black's Canadian master company Hollinger.

And if there is no Hanson "rescue" but an alternative solution, the peers will have generated some very useful political goodwill for when they come to make their expected valedictory farewell bid of bids, something that was clearly missing when they made their ill-timed run at ICI last year. After all, with Mrs T gone they need to have a new friend at court in the event of any political fall-out from their next move.

Canary Wharf is a classic Hanson deal — heads we win, tails we win even more.

THE Canary Wharf collapse was treated by most newspapers as if it was some kind of bombshell. In fact it was a disaster in the making for more than four years.

The October 1987 stock market crash killed off the endless expansion of the financial services sector on which Ozymandias Reichmann's dreamed of new City in the East relied. The terminal interest rates of the next three years and the resulting recession made new offices a no priority item. By last year the bulge in new office buildings in the City and West End without tenants made Docklands a next to impossible sell. Especially as Ozymandias had continued to press forward when he knew there was no effective public transport system that would enable the thousands of office serfs to reach his kingdom and it took even limosined suits hours to get to and from the hi-tech palaces he was building. Furthermore, that situation was unlikely to change for several years.

Despite such looming portents of doom, the press — lead by the Black and Murdoch titles which had already moved east — continued to laud the Reichmann dream and still applaud him as a pioneer who just miscalculated. £3 billion — some miscalculation.

Nowhere has this short-sightedness been more apparent than at the *Telegraph* twins. But then that is hardly surprising as not only does Ozymandias sit on the Hollinger board, but the *Telegraph* titles are among his few lonely tenants at Canary Wharf.

Not that you would have gathered that from the extensive coverage in the post-administration *Sunday Telegraph*. But then one item not mentioned in its discussion of what the tenants do next is the possible repercussions for the soon to float *Daily Telegraph* plc of the deal with O&Y on its former South Quay offices in Docklands.

As part of the usual Reichmann inducement to coax tenants into Canary Wharf, O&Y took a sub-lease on South Quay from the *Telegraph* with the aim of assigning that to a third party/tenant. South Quay was to be vacated by the *Telegraph* when it finalised its move to Canary Wharf. That could now leave the *Telegraph* paying rent on two offices if the Canary Wharf administrators, as is likely, walk away from O&Y's commitment. For with South Quay unlet, the landlord, the Docklands Development Corporation, could demand rent from the original leaseholder.

NEWS that property dealer and friend of Roger Seelig, Elliott Bernerd, has sold his Eaton Square apartment for nearly £10 million will serve to quieten those malicious and ill-informed tongues who suggest that he too might have been feeling the banks' tightening grip as the property world melts down.

Bernerd's Chelsfield group raised no less than £162 million from those property lovers Lloyds and Barclays before the Heron/O&Y/Mountleigh crises, plus at least £65 million in equity. Speculation that falling values on the Laing Properties portfolio, bought for £495 million with P&O two years ago and now split between the buyers, could create problems can be safely ignored.

THE link between Scotland Yard favourite Tony Schneider, Amber Day and its chairman Philip Green is much closer than suggested in the last *Eye*. A study of earlier Amber Day share registers reveals that until December 1990 Schneider, his wife and their company Eastcheap General Trading once owned 255,000 Amber Day shares worth more than £150,000.

Green moved into Amber Day in 1988. In mid-1990 the shares were suspended at 48p pending the injection of the What Everyone Wants discount store chain. Subsequently the shares stormed up to 63p by the end of the year.

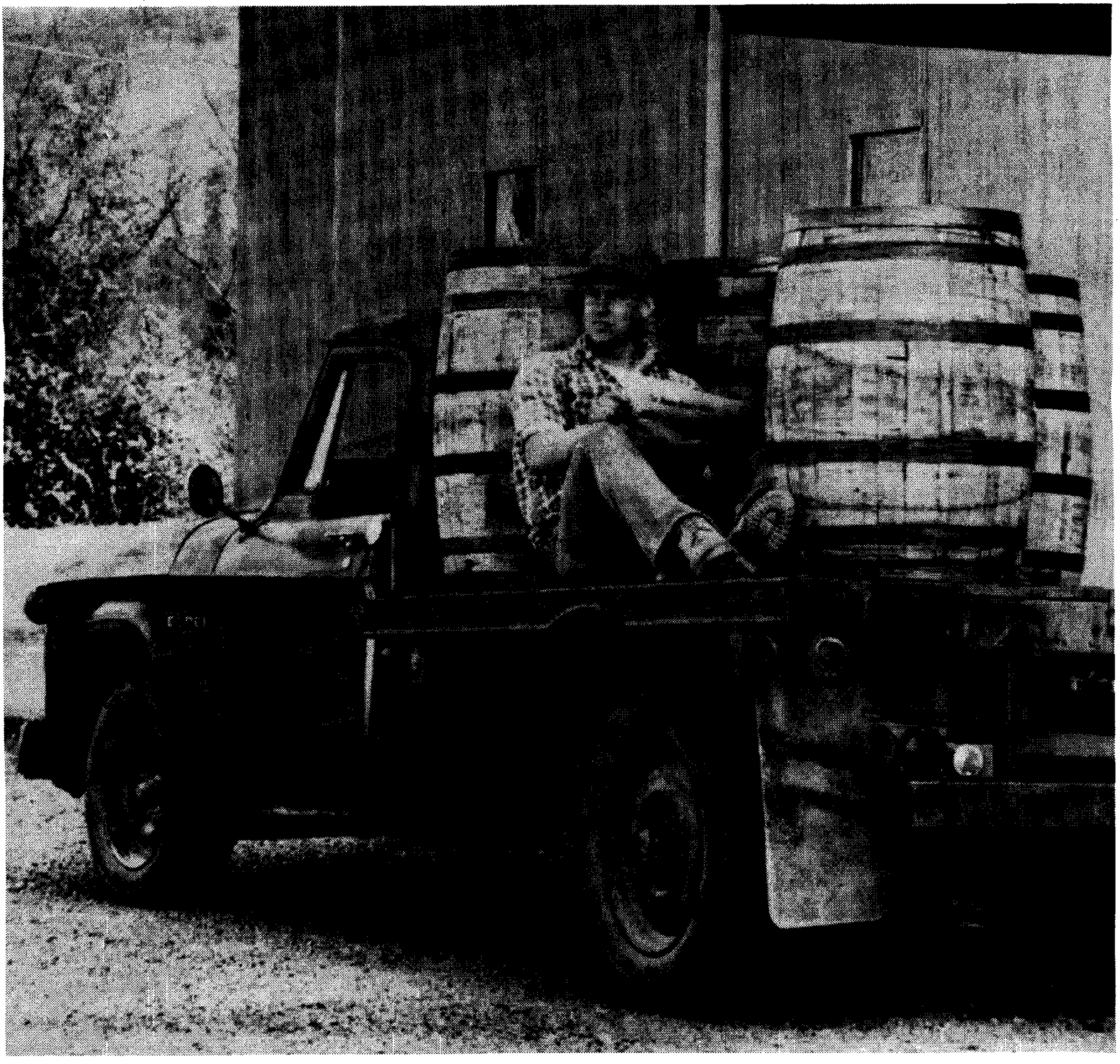
The Amber Day share register covering the period from November 1989 to December 1990 records the sale prior to December 14 of 25,000 shares by Schneider personally and 100,000 by his wife Vassiliki. These sales were of the entire holdings in their names. Mrs Schneider bought prior to November 1989 while Tony Schneider became a shareholder after November 1989.

On 21 December Eastcheap is shown as having sold 80,000 shares cutting its holding to 50,000 held in a second account. It had been a buyer before April 1989. Last year the shares reached 129p. They are now back to an unloved 57p.

Why a financier/money lender with a criminal record — Schneider's club membership at Scotland Yard's Criminal Records Office goes back to 1939 when he was 14 — who has been a long time target of police interest, in part because of his suspected American connections, should have such a fondness for Amber Day is no doubt entirely due to recognition of his self-admitted friend Philip Green's unique business talents.

'Slicker'

JOHN KENT PRESENTS
JOHN MAJOR'S SENSATIONAL BIG TOP CIRCUS & MENAGERIE
THE HIGH DINERS
WHAT DO WE GET AFTER THE FALL OF COMMUNISM?
THE COLLAPSE OF CAPITALISM.!?
John Kent



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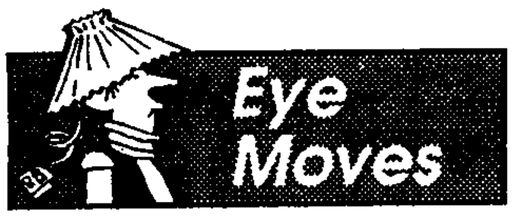

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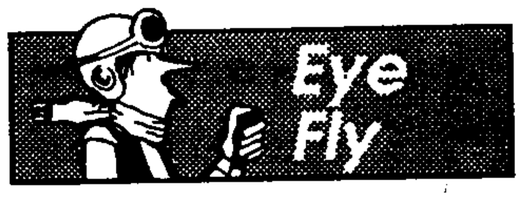

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GREGARIOUS MEN urgently wanted to meet attractive single ladies at London restaurant club parties. Call MEET 'N' EAT, 071-629 5534.

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CZECHMATE — 500+ cultured, sophisticated ladies — doctors, teachers, lawyers, radio, TV producers, "the Arts", from Czechoslovakia, seek sincere gentlemen for marriage. As featured on BBC News, Anglia TV, BBC World Service, Radio and TV, Sunday Observer. 0582-25960.

SERIOUS SEEKERS of spouses should contact Katharine Allen: "the ultimate in made-to-measure marriage bureaux" (S/Tel). Established 1960. 18 Thayer Street, London W1M 5LD. Tel: 071-935 3115.

SINGLE N.E. male (37), not yet ready to give up females, seeks quiet, choosy female — with similar quandary? Box 2595.

OXFORD BLUE-STOCKING, petite, artistic, with zany sense of humour, looking for the right man with whom to share the good things of life. Box 2995.

BACHELOR, 46, nervous wreck, seeks younger unattached neurotic woman to share panic attacks. Northants/anywhere. Box 3095.

ATTRACTIVE FUNLOVING male, married, 45, London based, seeks funloving lady 30-45 for highly discreet affair. Daytime phone no. please. Box 13395.

IRRELIGIOUS MALE (27) seeks biblical knowledge of attractive independent female (23ish-35ish). Failing that, friendship. Humour, intellect, imagination promised and expected. Photo appreciated. London area. Box 2795.

MIDGET LONDON saleswoman, 5'½" of dynamite, great fun, well-travelled, fair looker and still a bit of a goer at 40 seeks a bright, witty (unattached) attractive guy with more balls than she has. Photo appreciated (facial!). Box 2895.

PROFESSIONAL CHAP, 50s, sense of humour, bookish countrylover, considerate, seeks warm lady for occasional days out, evenings of mutual dalliance. S. Herts. Box 2695.

MID 50s MAN, married, shortish, quietly virile, urgently seeks intensely sensual liaison with mature passionate woman. Married woman in similar situation? Business woman/lawyer/doctor/academic needing secret lover? Total discretion guaranteed/required. London. Box 3195.

GOOD-LOOKING LADY journalist, 38, wants tallish, leftish, humorous and intelligent (That's enough, Ed) man for long-term commitment. London. Box 3295.

GOODLOOKING YOUNG airline pilot, great fun, affluent and super personality, seeks a naughty uninhibited female for country cottage and London flat liaisons. Box 3395.

FANTASY ISLAND starts here — I am male, tall, slim and fit. You are female and the same. Let's explore the pleasure zone together. London based. Box 3495.

PROFESSIONAL MAN, 30, 6'2", securely attached, seeks intelligent imaginative ally (18-29) for discreet daytime dalliance, Cheshire. Letter/photo appreciated. Box 3595.

ALMOST DYNAMIC, attractive male graduate (24) seeks bright, entertaining life-force. South-west area (photo please). Box 3695.

SHEFFIELD SCORPIO (28) seeks shapely siren. Box 3795.

DIVERSE INTERESTS: male designer, 38, tall, energetic, perceptive, uncomplicated, seeks intellectual and physical enchantment with libidinous lady. Herts/Cambs. Box 3895.

FEMALE PILOT seeks "Wright stuff" for barn storming. Box 3995.

AFFECTIONATE MALE 36, slim, 5'11", seeks attractive, warm, n/s female 25-35 for friendship, fun and evenings out (or in). Oxon/Berks. Photo please. Box 4095.

WRITER SEEKS GIRL. The ideal would be 25-35, have the wit of Jilly Cooper and the looks of Cybil Shepherd, but a reasonable approximation would do. What is more important is the ability to laugh if not all the way to the bank at least to my word processor. I'm in my 40s, just, well-off, well-published — 14 books — and look forward to champagne dinner for the best letter. Photo, telephone to Box 4195.

DEEPLY CARING educated lady divorcee seeks tall professional gentleman 50+ for mutual loving togetherness. Box 4295.

NO POET. Attractive male 29 seeks fun filled female for London life, friendship first not a wife. No photo needed just a letter. Please ensure your rhyme is better. Box 4395.

ARE YOU A bored housewife, fortyish, n/s? Life lacks excitement. Neglected! How about some daytime adventures and experimentation with extrovert Mensan businessman? Slightly overweight by fondness for good food and wine, but a laugh a minute. Go on. Take a chance! It'll be bloody good fun. E. Anglia preferred. Box 4495.

EDINBURGH, BORED but humorous female requires fun active 25-33ish male, urgently. Are there any? Box 4595.

TALL, ATTRACTIVE, slim, fit, 34 year old male seeks slim young lady to share lives, business, interests and pleasure together. My sign says this is the time! Does yours? Box 3493.

MALE 34 with eclectic tastes in food, music, film and travel seeks female with humour and own sense of style. Photo/tel no appreciated. Box 2395.

HOW ELSE will we meet? Tall handsome married man, 38, seeks passionate lady, 25-55, for affair. Photo appreciated. London, south east, west. Box 2495.

MAN, 24, SEEKS slim French or German-speaking girl for friendship and cuddles. Photo. Box 4695.

AFFECTIONATE PROFESSIONAL, 29, big blue eyes, and pink belly, leftish, greenish, slightly cynical, seeks Greek goddess with PhD ono, 24+. London/Midlands. Box 4795.

SENSUAL BLONDE discreet female (44) seeks mature solvent man (60+) for occasional mutually rewarding meetings. Box 4895.

LITERATE AND luminous golden girl seeks amiable Starsky for last of the summer wine. Box 4995.

FEMALE 31 seeks n/s man in 30s to rejuvenate her. Box 5095.

FOR AUCTION: most handsome dark professional man 1958 boasting agile mind, athletic torso and pert bottom. Sealed bids invited from good-looking woman of character. Photo please. Kent/S.East. Box 5195.

ECCENTRIC BUT honourable man, 46, 6'1", single iconoclastic sailing cycling entertaining smoking self-employed economist seeks post-1950 slim intelligent unattached competent middle class woman steady relationship. Westminster. Box 5295.

SINGLE MALE, successful graduate 37, seeks female 25/35. Merseyside, will travel. Box 5395.

TWO WITTY attractive men late 20s seeking distracting women 20-35, London based, for evenings out and larks. Box 5495.

LIFE IS GOOD but could be better if we could share some of the thrills and spills with two 35-45 year old single professional men (London). Box 5595.

AMBITIOUS INTELLIGENT stylish fun single man late twenties, heading for first million, into music sport dance travel and adventure seeks passionate and beautiful woman for amazing relationship. Box 5695.

ME: YOUTHFUL 60s, comfy marriage, no sex, n/s male. You: 30-something independent lonely nature-loving. Us: gentle loving friends. S.East/Wessex areas. Box 5795.

ALMOST THIRTY and alone! Male wanted to share my life and loves. Me goodlooking and s.o.h. You? Interested, then reply! (Hants, Berks, Surrey area). Box 5895.

LONDON MAN, actively retired, cultured, seeks female friends of discretion and maturity. Current ties no problem. Photo appreciated and returned. Box 5995.

ABERDEEN — FUN affectionate impulsive woman seeks warm strong intelligent hero (29-39) friend, confidante and lover for deep and lasting mutual happiness. Where are you? Box 6095.

HAMPSTEAD DESIGNER 5'11" dark handsome seeks attractive arts woman. Photo. Box 6195.

INEXPERIENCED YOUNG man seeks naughty older woman (22+) for tuition and sensuality. Photo please! Yorks/North. Box 6295.

HOUSE TRAINED, 6'2", blue eyed, good looking, athletic 33 year old, professional male, seeks similar female with a view to enjoying life, the universe and everything, interested? London/south east. Box 6895.

BUSINESSMAN (MATURE) seeks delicious female (44+) for delectable discreet daytime outings. Greater London. Box 11195.

SUPPORTIVE MALE intellectual sensual honest seeking similar female companion 50-60. Box 11295.

MALE BUSINESSMAN bored at work needs females all ages as pen pals. Box 11395.

SOUTH YORKSHIREMAN (39), tall, slim, divorced, loves music, seeks unattached n/s Northern lass, 25-40. Sense of humour essential. Photo please. Box 11495.

BUZZ MISSING? Fun run out? Youthful graduate, 52, married but cheerful, own business, 6', distinguished looking, seeks slim attractive n/s lady to spoil. Yorks/NW. Discretion assured. Box 11595.

EDINBURGH FESTIVAL. London based male, 44, seeks n/s female for cultural enjoyable and romantic trip. Box 11695.

SINGLE MALE, 29, shy intelligent, couch potato tendencies, seeks naughty but nice older woman. Berks. Box 7495.

TWO ATHLETIC Viking warriors (25) masquerading as successful graduates seek fit fun loving (London and SE based) women for grape and pillage. Box 7595.

WEST MIDLANDS professional, straightforward man, 40s, seeks humorous lady for discreet affair. ALA. Box 11795.

CHALLENGE ME. London writer/actress seeks genuine (not aspiring) creative/literary man... Bright, brave, funny, under 48, unafraid of relationship with wilful, opinionated, occasionally tempestuous redhead. Photo please. Box 8495.

SEMI RETIRED businessman recently returned from Far East is desirous of female companionship with a Far Eastern flavour for wining, dining etc. Any area. Photo appreciated. Box 8595.

DARK UNPLAYED male Stradivarius (5'8", slim, 25 years) desperately needs slim female virtuoso (23-28 years) for light romantic tuition. Essex & London area. Photo and letter appreciated. Box 8695.

MEDITERRANEAN LOOKING Oxford University educated trainee masseur, 37, 5'11", single, seeks exceptional female mind and body. Photo appreciated. Bucks/SE. Box 6395.

TALL, DARK, brown-eyed, gentle lad, 24, seeks sincere lass with black leggings. ALA. Midlands. Box 6495.

OXFORD NORTHANTS handsome tall professional 35 humorous sensuous funloving seeks lady who needs to feel wanted daytime/evenings? Box 6595.

AGEING LOTHARIO (late 40s) unattached, affluent seeks classy lady to cosset and cuddle. London. Photo please. Box 6695.

PRESENTABLE entrepreneur — recently divorced, tallish, medium build, warm, generous, varied interests, mature — seeks compatible lady 45/50 sensual, petite, shapely, for mutual comfort and fun. S.W. London/Thameside. Photo please. Box 6795.

ECLECTIC, STYLISH, independent, Italian-French female with many passions and interests including music, cinema, theatre, food, wine, keeping fit, expects the Eye to find a sophisticated powerful, BCBG, fascinating, amusing, very fit, gracious arbiter elegantiarum, 35/45 n/s male. Box 7195.

UNRULY NOVICE stallion needs firm lady trainer for undressage schooling. Box 7295.

INEXPERIENCED MALE graduate, 26, seeks slim interesting woman with sense of humour. Write and tell me of your self, your dreams, desires and phantasies and I will strive to be part of them. Photo appreciated. Midlands. Box 7395.

SINGLE MALE, 37, slim, kind, professional career, living East Midlands, interested in music, sport, travel, socialising and eating out (can't cook) seeks single slim and amusing non smoking lady for a warmer summer. Box 10595.

MALE 32, TALL, intelligent, sincere, involved in the arts, seeks educated humorous female. London. Box 10695.

PROFESSIONAL MALE, 35, solvent, seeks attractive woman, 20/45, who has wit, independence and the ability to have fun. London area. Box 10795.

FEMALE, 35, attractive bright successful, personable tolerant, no hidden complications. If you're the right man and your good friends knew hers you'd be dating in W. Midlands by now. This ad placed by well-intentioned (married) friend without her knowledge. Replies delivered unopened. Box 10895.

CURRYHOLIC LEO 27, 6'4" professional, genuine, smoker, seeks single humorous woman 20-30 to spice up life. No hairy armpits! Photo please. Hants. Box 10995.

MALE TALL BLOND attractive 25 seeks a female bodybuilder or similar for fun and maybe more. ALA. Photo, phone appreciated. Box 11095.

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ATTRACTIVE EDUCATED R.C. female (30) seeks single professional tall male. Box 6995.

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INDEPENDENT, ARTICULATE, leftward woman, 37, into rock and blues, theatre, walking, Radio 4, imbibing, siestas, seeks laidback, slightly jaded, non-smoking man. East Midlands. Box 7695.

WESTCOUNTRY businessman, 37, good looking, slim, affluent, seeks affair with sensual, attractive lady who needs some sparkle put back into life. Absolute discretion assured. Photo please. Box 7795.

MUSICIAN, LIFE upended by selfish celebrity seeks slim petite female to restore faith in human nature. Age immaterial. Box 7895.

MAD POET young 50 seeks artistic female. Box 7995.

ATTRACTIVE MALE, 39, single, seeks exciting female for long lunchtime affair. Must wear stockings. Box 8095.

FRISKY YOUNG colt (23) seeks decent/indecent filly/mare. Torquay/S.Devon. Box 8195.

TALL HANDSOME caring successful man early thirties recently separated, with great sense of humour seeks attractive and physically sensitive girl twenties for laughs and fun. South east. Photo please. Box 8295.

NORTH EAST intelligent man, 36, hobbies train spotting and bungee jumping, wants to meet female for fun outings in town and country. Box 8395.

ATTRACTIVE PROFESSIONAL male, late 30s, successful career and is happily married, but missing excitement in life, wishes to meet female for laughter, stimulating conversation, candlelit dinners and passionate but discreet affair. London area. Box 8795.

TALL UNDERSTANDING architect 56 unhappily married Warwickshire would cherish an exciting friendship with a lady who wants to enjoy life. Box 9595.

YOUNG 42 year old married man seeks warm earthy lady 24-45 with good sense of humour as friend and lover to share things and have fun. Can be very discreet. London/home counties. Box 9695.

MOST EXCELLENT male 27 London into cycling and eating seeks free-spirited female for adventure. Box 9995.

ATTRACTIVE SOCIABLE Co. M.D., 32, tied to hectic travelling lifestyle needs (long term?) affair with a clever sexy lady with smiling eyes. Box 10095.

SHIVER DOWN your spine! Dream man at peak. Attractive, successful, creative, athletic, laidback, fun to be with. Married but off leash. Will make pretty, witty, unappreciated wife or career girl feel special. Photo, phone if poss. Box 9795.

MALE 34, 6'1" recently moved to Sussex, single solvent, no hang-ups seeks female 25+ to share summer days out and who knows what later! Photo appreciated. Boring ad I know but why lie? Box 9895.

MANCHESTER, INTELLIGENT woman seeks lively longhaired articulate man, 21-35, for casual fun evenings. No Tories, husbands or romantics. Photo please. Box 10495.

ATTRACTIVE HUMOROUS professional man 50s seeks discreet daytime affair with intelligent, slim sexy lady 30s Oxford area/West London. Box 11895.

ARTIST, 40, single, attractive, solvent, London based, seeks outgoing travel orientated woman. Box 11995.

TALL ROMANTIC sane and optimistic man, 35, securely married, seeks similar lady for very discreet occasional mutual life enhancement. Lancs, NW. Photo ensures reply. Box 12695.

NORTH SEA DIVER, sports car driver, snappy dresser, helluva nice guy! 32 single n/s, where are all the mermaids? Photo please. Box 12795.

INTELLIGENT PROFESSIONAL female, widow, 44, seeks genuine romantic male with well developed sense of humour. Knowledge of Ry Cooder an advantage. Warwicks. Box 12895.

PROFESSIONAL MALE, 35, single, n/s, warm honest and sincere, likes theatre travel wining and dining, seeks similarly minded female for fun and romance. Sense of humour and honesty essential. Box 12995.

EXCITING ISOLDE seeks educated Tristan (30+) for high seas and low tides. London area preferably. Box 13095.

VICTORIA WOOD apprentice (31, scintillating) seeks inspiration and romance from Steve Martin trainee (tall, caring, own brain). Box 13195.

HAPPILY-MARRIED man, thirty something, London based, successful, good-looking, educated but somewhat unfulfilled seeks lady (30-45) in similar situation for very discreet relationship. Tel. no. appreciated. Box 10195.

ATTRACTIVE GRADUATE 28 seeks bored housewife 18-50 to ravish. Midlands. Box 10295.

PERSONABLE, OUTGOING, intelligent, anarchistic, hedonistic, music-loving widower (active mid-sixties) architect (own practice), poet (widely published), good cook, seeks attractive woman for companionship, loving, marriage, whatever. Photograph appreciated. N.W. London area. Box 10395.

MALE GRADUATE, 33, single, shy, intelligent and occasionally witty, wishes to meet or correspond with bright, attractive female, 20-33, for genuinely intimate friendship. Box 12095.

STALLION WITH staying power seeks frisky fortyish filly for frequent furlongs. My fone or foto for yours. And that's guaranteed. London, Herts, Bucks. Box 12195.

WORKAHOLIC CONSULTANT, Oxbridge, 50ish, good-looking, separated, solvent, slim seeks pretty, passionate girl-friend for theatre, wining, dining and imaginative things thereafter. Satisfaction guaranteed. I seek a fun relationship without complications. Do your secret fantasies coincide with mine? Letter, phone, photo (if possible). All answered. London, home counties, Herts. Box 12295.

HOMECOMING EXPAT City guy (32) seeks London career woman who enjoys sport, food, drink, travel, for fun, friendship and romance. Box 12395.

I'M SEARCHING for someone to share the joys of life. I'm 36, female and enjoy the outdoors, sport, travel and friends. S.E. England. Box 12495.

ELEPHANT MAN seeks Cleopatra. You provide asses' milk, I'll bring a paper bag! Sun or FT reader preferred. London. Box 12595.

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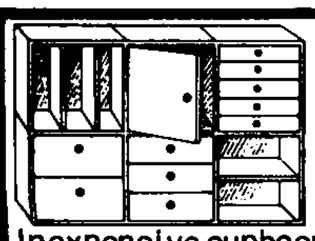

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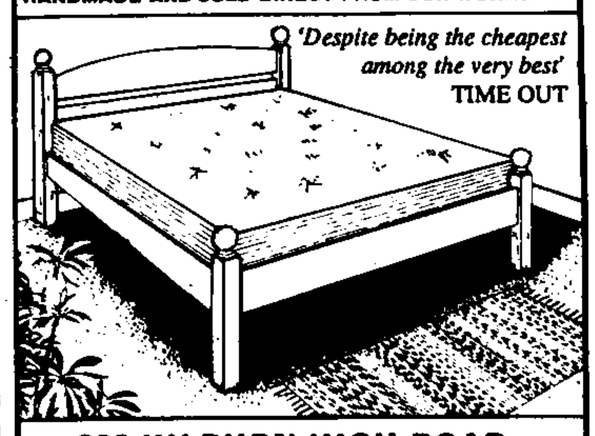

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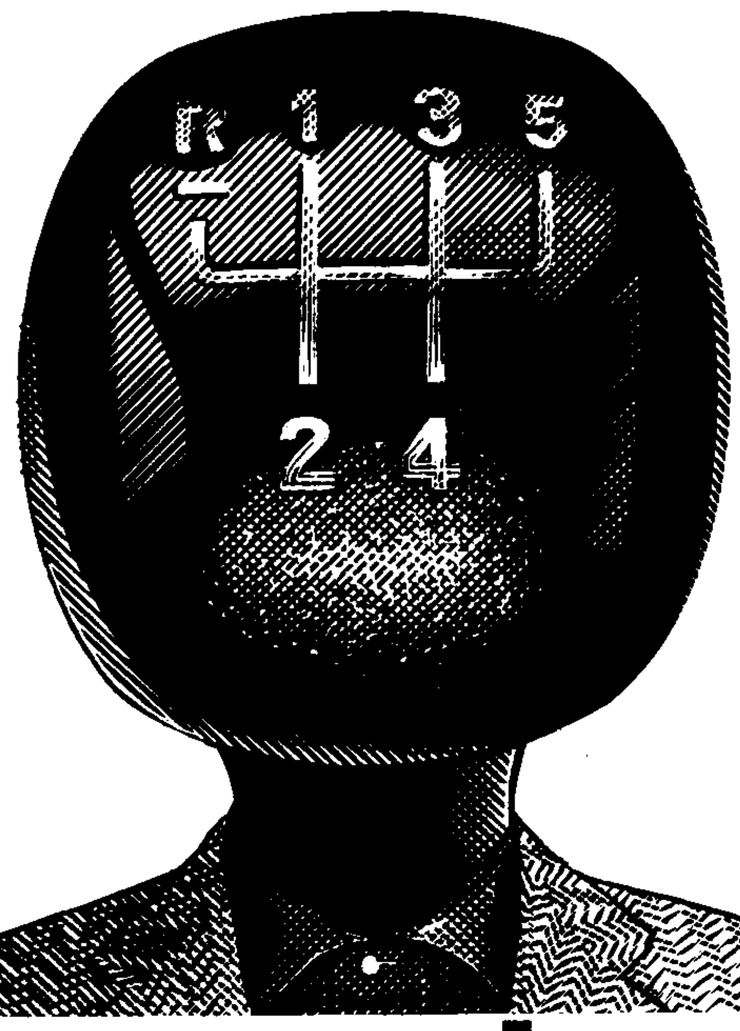

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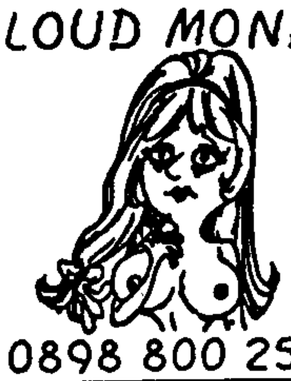

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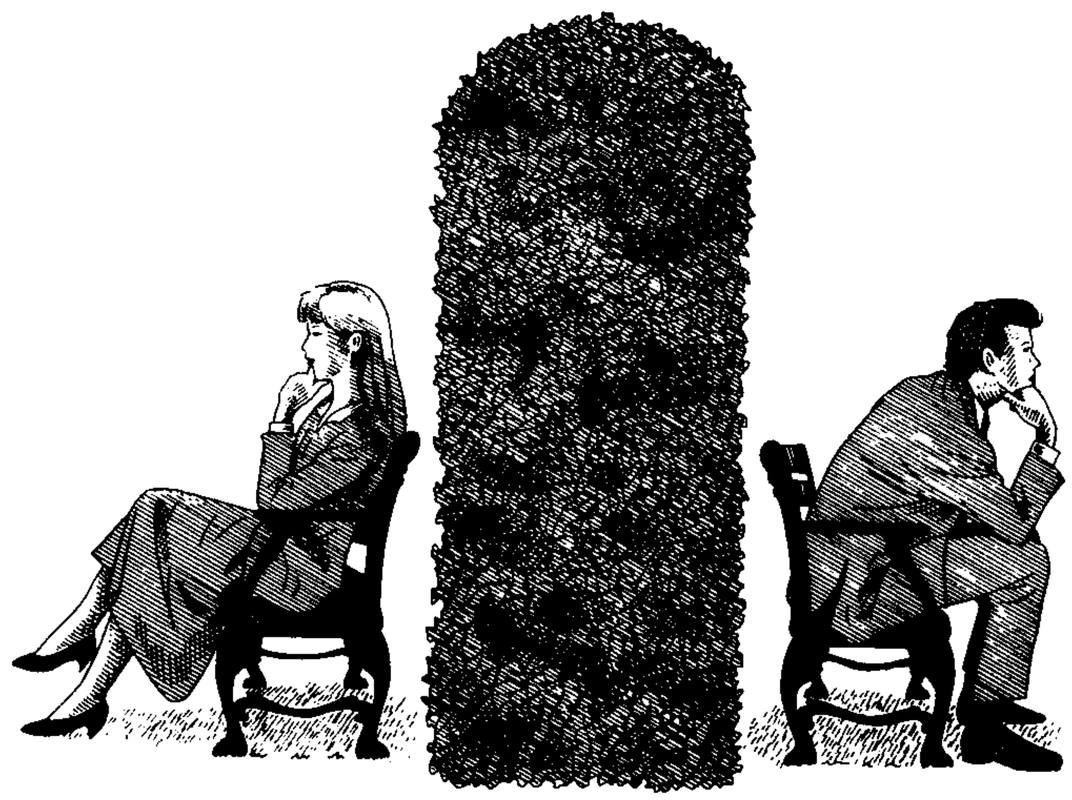

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If you respond to this advertisement, you'll be sent a very detailed questionnaire.
First, you're asked to answer some fairly straightforward questions about yourself: your general appearance, your background, your education, religion, politics – and so on.
Next you're asked to describe the kind of person you'd like to meet by answering the same set of questions.
You can even specify WHERE you'd like to meet them. (It's little use our finding you the right person in John O'Groats if you live at Land's End).
Then the questionnaire moves on to the really crucial part, where you answer questions about your interests, your personality and what you expect from your social life and personal relationships.
(Most people find the questionnaire both enjoyable and revealing).
Once the questionnaire is completed and returned to us, our computer goes to work, checking through the records of every single Dateline member, searching for the person who best matches the picture you've built up.
And it's important to remember that the computer may already be searching for YOU on someone else's behalf.

COMPUTERS AREN'T HUMAN

Our computer can't, of course, make relationships: only you can do that.
All the computer does is make the introductions and we find it usually selects six compatible people in each run.
Their names are given to you, all you have to do is arrange to meet. Naturally, there's no guarantee any introduction will be a success, but consider this for once, you'll be meeting someone who

POSITIVELY WANTS TO MEET YOU – and that's a good start to any relationship.
Dateline, we must stress, is not for people who think it might be a bit of a lark, but for caring people who are looking for something more. Perhaps that describes you?
If it does, fill in the coupon and we'll send you our questionnaire, together with a free copy of our paperback "All you need is love" – a book full of genuine stories of how Dateline members meet their ideal partner. Naturally, your enquiry will be dealt with in the strictest confidence.

Dateline

23 Abingdon Rd. London W8 6AL
Tel: 071 938 1011
The world's largest and most successful agency

WHY LEAVE LOVE TO CHANCE?

Yes I would like more information about Dateline
also Dateline Gold ☐ and Dateline Magazine ☐ (available at good newsagents £2.00) another way for people to meet

(Mr Mrs Miss)
NAME.....
ADDRESS.....
.....
.....
.....
POSTCODE..... AGE .....

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PE 07

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